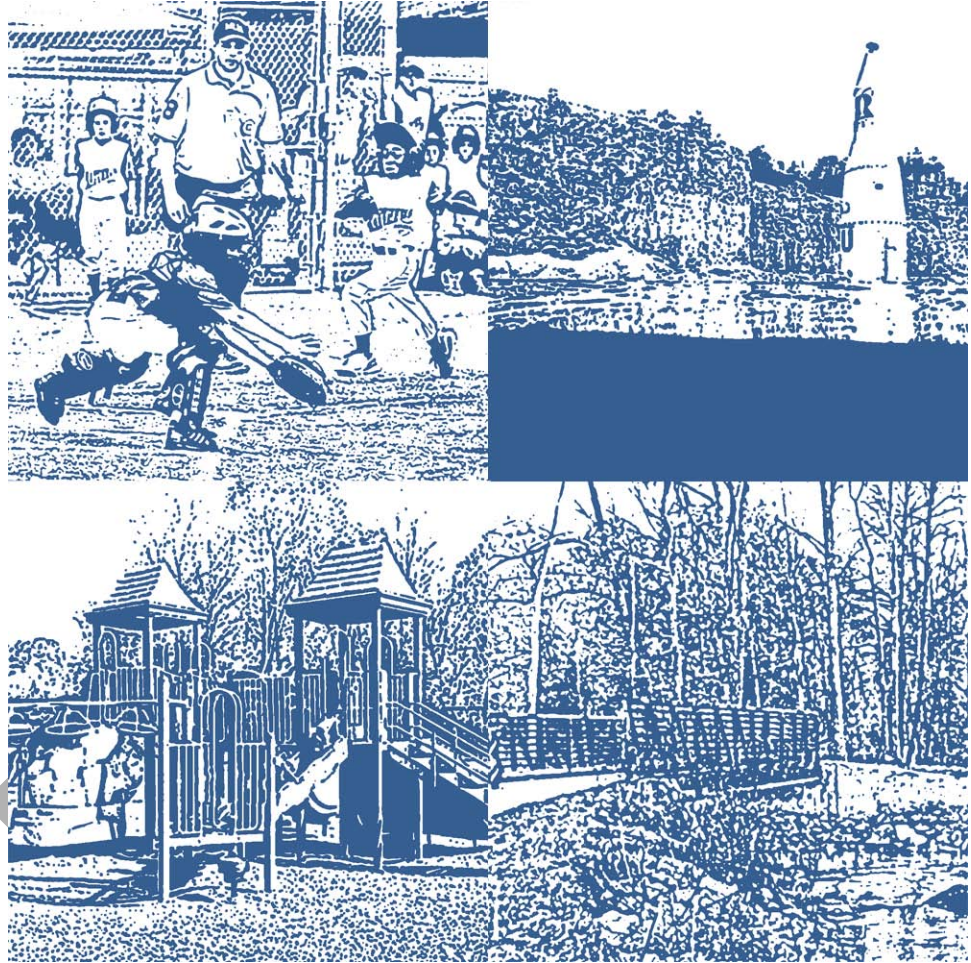


Parks and Recreation



Master Plan

2014-2025

City of *Madison*
ALABAMA

City of Madison

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Introduction



All children deserve contact with nature as part of their heritage.... The more our children see and know of the natural world around them, the better equipped they will be to face the basic realities of life and realize the noble potential of existence this planet has to offer.

*—Ansel Adams, US
photographer, 1902-84*

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Purpose of the Plan

Municipal parks and recreation facilities are a service of the City of Madison to its residents, businesses and visitors. They assure families safe, quality places to play and—in addition to Madison’s great schools—for children to develop physically and socially through free play and competitive sports. They provide adult residents places to exercise, unwind and interact. For older residents, they are irreplaceable sites to gather, enjoy themselves and maintain a connection with the community around them.

The parks system is also a physical manifestation of Madison’s values, self-image and quality of life. A robust, well-planned and designed parks and recreation system projects a message that the City cares deeply for its people and provides the best for them. This is valuable in efforts to attract and retain businesses and a talented employment base. High quality parks and recreation facilities can also add to the local economy through sports and outdoor recreation tourism, increasing activity in area hotels, restaurants and shopping destinations.

Finally, parks are also part of the city’s infrastructure—not just a quality of life amenity—but a part of the city’s essential systems. Parks are one of only a few uses of land that can be located in sensitive environmental areas without damaging natural functions like drainage, and yet still provide a whole other meaningful service to residents.

The desire for a Parks and Recreation Master Plan emerged during the preparation of the Madison Growth Plan. In answer to that call, this Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed to be the primary guiding document for improving, expanding and managing the City of Madison parks system over the next decade. Maintaining and growing parks and recreational facilities are essential investments by the City of Madison to provide an exceptional quality of life to its residents, businesses and visitors. The Master Plan is put into action by the Parks and Recreation Department with the support of City officials, boards and community stakeholders and serves as an extension of the City’s comprehensive plan.

“In the absence of informal public life, living becomes more expensive. Where the means and facilities for relaxation and leisure are not publicly shared, they become the objects of private ownership and consumption.”

Ray Oldenburg

“The Great Good Place”

According to the Alabama Tourism Department, five of the top ten most visited, paid attendance tourist destinations in 2012 were parks and outdoor recreation facilities, including Point Mallard Park in nearby Decatur and the Huntsville Botanical Gardens.

The goals for the Master Plan were to:

1. Inventory and evaluate the current conditions of Madison's parks and recreation facilities
2. Assess future parks and recreation needs based on projected population growth and community values
3. Establish an overall vision for the Madison parks system to serve the community's recreational needs and help accomplish other goals for the community's physical, cultural and economic development
4. Establish an overall open space and greenway system that links the City's cultural, recreational, and civic amenities
5. Foster development of a parks system that builds on Madison's unique character and quality-of-life
6. Set priorities for how and where parks and recreation funding is allocated in the future to best meet the needs and desires of the community



At the community workshop held on September 24, 2013, participants were given an opportunity to vote for their parks and recreation priorities and give input on the quality and character of the city parks system.

Process

This Master Plan was developed over the summer and fall of 2013. The process began with an analysis of existing city parks and recreation facilities, private recreational offerings, environmental conditions and developmental characteristics and plans of the city. The planning team, City staff and a parks and recreation advisory committee reviewed the inventory in the context of NRPA's traditional standards and annual PRORAGIS reports, data from the Trust for Public Land's *City Park Facts* publications and stakeholder assessments. A community workshop and senior workshop were held to further refine the needs assessment and document the community's overall parks and recreation priorities. The planning team, in coordination with City staff, prepared initial recommendations that would become the backbone of the plan. The planning team also evaluated operational funding against peer cities both regionally and nationally and projected costs of recommended parks improvements. Draft recommendations were reviewed with the advisory committee and city representatives and the final plan was assembled and submitted to the Madison Planning Commission in Spring 2014.

Community Profile

Located just ten miles west of Huntsville, Madison is a rapidly growing community known for its high-quality schools, well-educated residents and high-tech companies. According to the US Census, Madison grew by 46% between 2000 and 2010 and the population has continued a steady increase. In 2009 and 2011, Madison was among the top 100 of America's Best Places to Live by Money Magazine.

Demographics

Madison's popularity among families is reflected in its low median age (37) and high percentage of residents under age 18 (29.4%). Madison has also become increasingly attractive to seniors, with the 65 and older population more than doubling between 2000 and 2010.

The city is well-educated, safe and economically strong:

- Over 95% of Madison residents are high school graduates and over half have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, well above neighboring Huntsville and Decatur.
- The crime rate (182.5, in 2010) has trended downward over the years and is considerably lower than the US average of 319.1.
- Madison's median household income (\$92,427) is twice or more than that of Huntsville and Decatur according to 2010-2012 American Community Survey estimates.
- Value of owner-occupied homes in Madison (\$236,900 according to 2010-2012 ACS estimates) greatly exceeds that of neighboring cities.

The city's steady growth is expected to continue over the next twenty years. According to estimates by the City of Madison, should growth continue as experienced since 1990, by 2030 the population of Madison could reach 64,000. Population increases, particularly of this magnitude, present a challenge to provide a quantity and diversity of parks and recreation amenities commensurate with the increased size of the community.

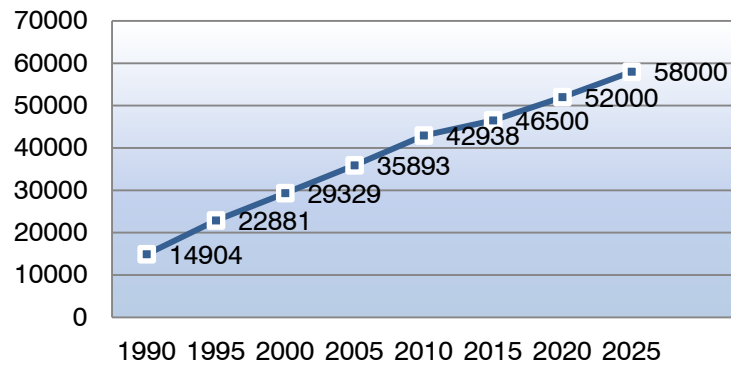


Madison could be welcoming over 20,000 new residents by the year 2030.



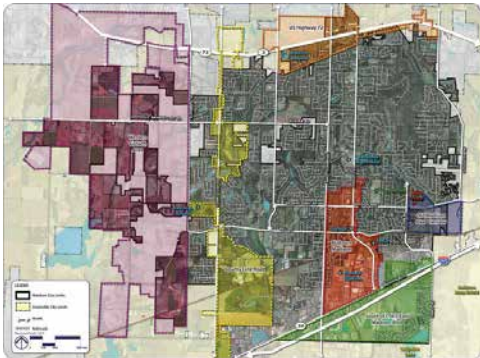
Homes in Madison have an average value of almost \$240,000, well above the average house prices in Huntsville and Decatur.

Population Projections

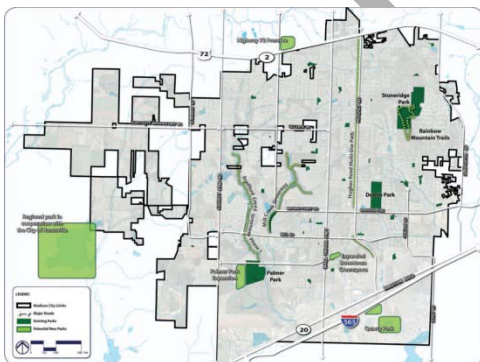


Madison Growth Plan

In 2011 the City of Madison adopted its citywide Growth Plan as a central component of its comprehensive plan. That plan established an overall framework for continued development and provided focused recommendations for growth in several “key development areas.” These recommendations included strategies for reinvestment in existing areas as well as new investment in relatively undeveloped areas such as West Madison.



Key Development Areas Map from the Madison Growth Plan.



Greenways and Parks Map from the Madison Growth Plan.

Of particular importance to parks and recreation planning, the Growth Plan states that various areas of the city in 2010 were in need of park space and that future parks additions should support greater walkability within the community and that the City should develop a strategic plan for parks and recreation to capitalize on “targets of opportunity”. Analysis performed for this planning process supports that finding, recognizing that while there is sufficient total park space, there are neighborhoods and districts with an abundance of park space and those where parks and open space are distinctly lacking. The following are the major recommendations of the Growth Plan regarding parks and recreation:

1. Develop a recreation plan based on anticipated growth, including the number and types of fields and other facilities necessary to meet community demand
2. Continue development of a citywide greenspace network that interconnects neighborhoods, parks, schools and other destinations
3. Create additional recreational opportunities around the Stadium

Introduction

4. Enhance the existing downtown open space and link downtown to the stadium, skate park and YMCA
5. Adapt the quarry as a public recreational amenity
6. Expand Palmer Park
7. Create an open space preserve north of US 72 between Balch Road and Wall Triana Highway
8. Support the development of a regional park southwest of the City in partnership with the City of Huntsville

These recommendations informed the planning process and are reflected in this plan's Key Recommendations (p. 14).

Greenway and Trails Plan

In 2000 the Madison Greenway and Trails Committee, with assistance of the National Park Service, prepared a citywide plan for greenways and trails to guide the development of on and off-street facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. At the time, a few sidewalk-lined streets, the multi-use path along Hughes Road and nature trails at the Rainbow Mountain Nature Preserve were the only bike-ped facilities in Madison. The greenway and trail plan prioritized installation of sidewalks, bikeways, nature trails and multi-use paths based on their projected use, environmental context, linkage potential, funding opportunities and relationship to planned capital improvements. The City has since initiated development of trails along Bradford and Mill Creeks, striped "sharrows" on Highland Drive, and constructed a multiuse path segment from Wall Triana to Hughes Road along Eastview Drive. And, installation of sidewalk on major roads in concert with new development has also begun. Today Madison has over 7.5 miles of multiuse corridors (including combined and separated paths) installed and open to the public and a 2.5 mile segment of the Bradford Creek Greenway are funded and underway.



The City has installed a multiuse path on both sides of Eastview Drive to provide safe access to Bob Jones High School.



Multiuse trail on Hughes Road



Sharrow markings and speed table on Highland Drive

Projects identified in the Greenways and Trail Plan as high priorities that are still to be constructed include:

- Rainbow Mountain sidewalk connections
- Sidewalks and bike lanes on Balch Road (proposed extension from Mill Road to Madison Blvd.)
- Gillespie Road multiuse path (Balch to County Line Rd.)
- Sidewalks and bike lanes on Celtic Drive

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Recreation is no longer simply having fun. Rather, it involves the kind of America we have, and want to have, and the kind of people we are and are likely to become.

*—Laurance S. Rockefeller,
Venture Capitalist and
Conservationist*

Master Plan

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Vision

This Master Plan is built upon five primary aspirations that underlie the goals, recommendations and strategies for the expansion and enrichment of the Madison parks and recreation system.

The City of Madison envisions a parks and recreation system that will be:

- A center of community life
- Abundant in active and passive recreation opportunities, natural areas and designed spaces
- For all ages—children, young adults, adults and seniors
- A system of walkways, greenways, trails and parks that weaves the community together
- Composed of premiere facilities that support economic development through visitation

Goals

1. Our parks system is balanced and inclusive

To create a more balanced and inclusive parks system, the City of Madison intends to:

- 1.1. Focus investment on larger, mixed-activity parks
- 1.2. Integrate passive and active recreational uses
- 1.3. Strengthen and/or expand larger neighborhood parks
- 1.4. Provide recreational offerings for the young and old
- 1.5. Assure parks and recreation facilities are accessible
- 1.6. Provide civic open space within the parks system

2. Our parks are well-maintained

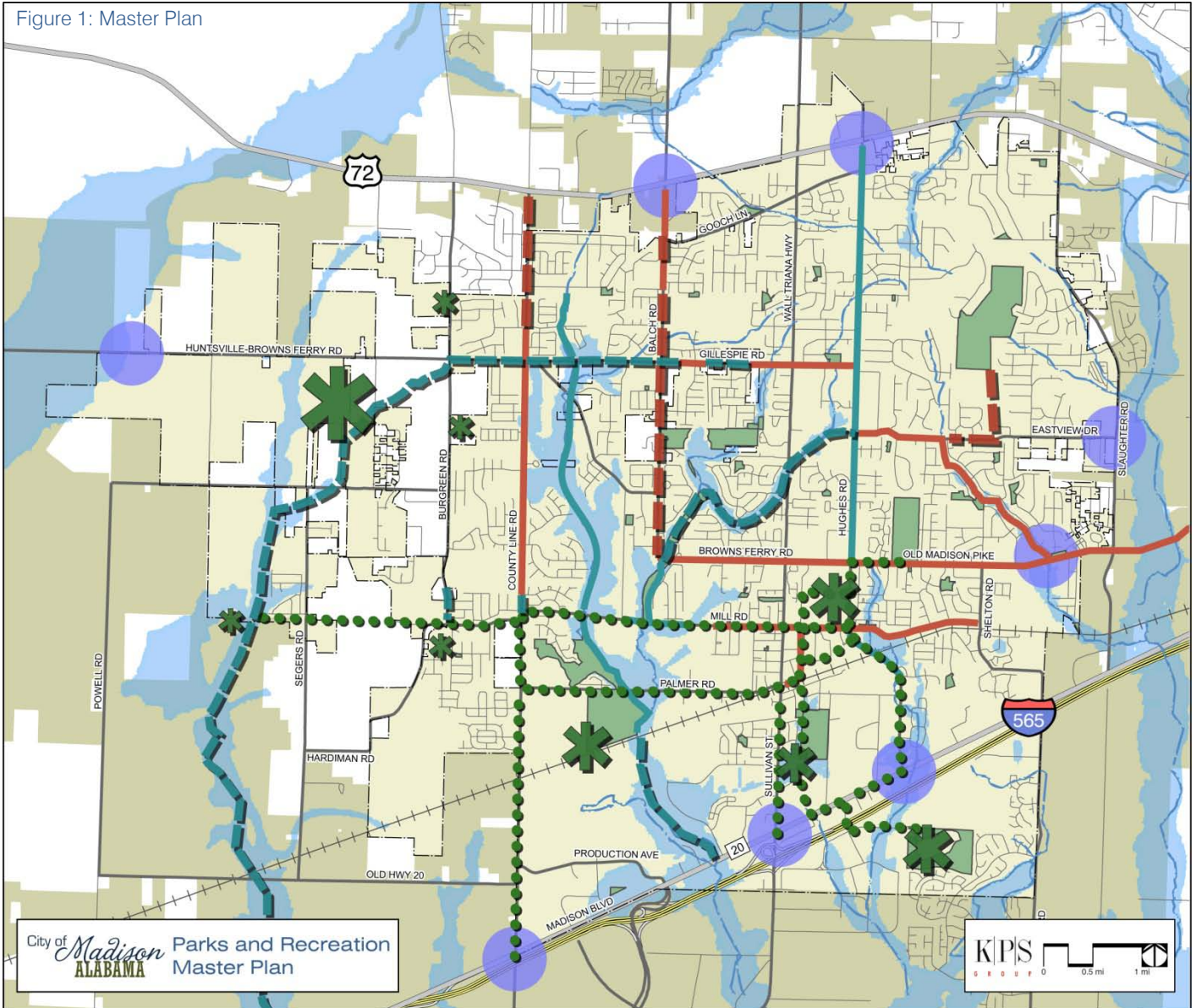
To assure sustained, effective maintenance of city parks, the City of Madison intends to:

- 2.1. Make existing parks more maintenance-efficient
- 2.2. Use durable, low-maintenance designs and materials
- 2.3. Update maintenance policies and procedures
- 2.4. Provide adequate operational funding










Goals

1. Our parks system is balanced and inclusive
2. Our parks are well-maintained
3. Parks and greenways connect us all
4. Our recreational facilities are high quality

Figure 1: Master Plan



Master Plan

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Existing Greenway |  Proposed Park/Expansion |
|  Existing Pedestrian Corridor |  City Gateway |
|  Proposed Greenway |  Existing Floodplain |
|  Proposed Pedestrian Corridor |  Existing Parks |
|  Proposed Green Street | |

3. Parks and greenways connect us all

- 3.1. Continue development of bicycle and pedestrian links
- 3.2. Provide recreational offerings for the young and old
- 3.3. Provide civic open space within the parks system
- 3.4. Integrate parks with their neighborhoods and districts

4. Our recreational facilities are high-quality

- 4.1. Integrate passive and active recreational uses
- 4.2. Develop tournament-quality sports facilities
- 4.3. Use durable, low-maintenance designs and materials

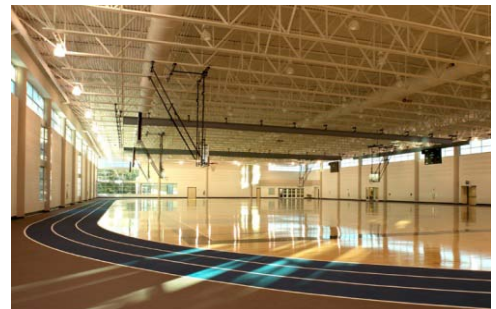
Key Recommendations

The following recommendations describe the primary objectives for expanding and enhancing the city parks system over the next several years. The recommendations are not listed in order of priority. For priorities, refer to the Implementation section of this plan.

1. Create a Downtown Recreation Campus

The Madison Growth Plan recommended planning and developing the parks and recreation system in ways that fulfill the community's recreation needs while fostering unique development opportunities. The Downtown Recreation Campus is one such effort and should be planned and developed in concert with the City's planning and economic development office, and with Madison City Schools as a collaborative investment.

The recreation campus should include the existing football stadium; a multiple-purpose building for recreation, banquets and town hall meetings, an indoor pool, and shared parking facilities. The campus should be developed in a manner that links downtown Madison to Madison Boulevard. The downtown recreation campus has the opportunity to generate revenue through recreational tourism and can serve as a catalyst for additional economic development, such as lodging, shopping and dining activity in adjacent business areas.



The proposed Downtown Recreation Campus would offer indoor facilities like these that allow year-round use.



Figure 2: Concept for development of a Downtown Recreation Campus along Celtic Drive

Together, the City and the school system can achieve efficiency—using shared parking and other common infrastructure and facilities—and maximize return on investment by locating these facilities together. Some of the benefits are:

- A “green street” built through the campus provides a direct connection between Madison Station and hotels and retail businesses on Madison Boulevard.
- A sports tourism destination that features a stadium, pool, indoor multi-purpose courts, indoor soccer, shared

common areas for restrooms and food service, and outdoor sports fields.

- A multi-purpose indoor center that can also serve as meeting and conference space.
- Shared parking, lighting, and infrastructure.

2. Acquire property/ build a Community Park

During the Community Visioning Workshop participants were asked to vote for their priorities for enhancing the city parks system over the coming years. Participants overwhelmingly agreed that the highest priority is development of a new community park. This further supported findings of the parks inventory and analysis.

Workshop participants felt there should be a balance between active and passive recreation areas—an integrated mixture of sports fields and natural areas with walking trails and picnic facilities. The community also emphasized high quality in the design and maintenance of such a new facility, indicating they should meet or exceed the level of similar facilities in nearby Cullman and Decatur.

Given the City's high growth rate, it is critical to reserve parkland today to meet future needs. The most strategic location for a new park is on the western side of Madison, an area that is currently underserved with parks. An ideal community park site would be 40 to 70 acres in size, and would include areas of mature vegetation, open meadows, and abundant natural beauty. An appropriate park site should be readily accessible by vehicles, and offer opportunities to connect to the City's greenway and sidewalk system. Proximity to retail and cultural amenities would help to make this a desirable recreational tourist attraction.

A master plan for the park should be developed for the long term use of the site; while the actual development may occur in phases. The park should include areas for both active and passive recreation, and should feature natural areas with mature vegetation. The park should be carefully designed to take advantage of its landscape. Activities should be arranged to use available space effectively and with the convenience and enjoyment of many different types of park users in mind.

The facilities program for the park should be based on the greatest need and appropriateness of various facility types to

Visioning Workshop participants overwhelmingly agreed that the highest priority for enhancing the city parks system is development of a new park.



This community park in Birmingham, Alabama integrates natural elements with passive recreation and sports facilities.

the site and community context. The needs assessment indicated that the future community park should include facilities for soccer, lacrosse, football, adult softball, and tennis to meet current and growing demands. Initial facilities should include lighted soccer fields, football fields, and lacrosse fields, tennis courts, play areas, trails, restrooms, concession areas, and parking. Other master plan components such as softball fields and tennis courts may be planned for future phases.

3. Civic Park

Madison does not have a signature open space for passive enjoyment and community events. Currently, a linear open space between Front Street and the railroad is the only public space of this type in historic Madison Station. On the northern end of the Midtown area is City Hall at the intersection of Mill and Hughes Roads. A suitable site should be located that can house an amphitheater or similar flexible open space for a variety of community gatherings.

This space is envisioned as one that is the primary site for community-wide events (Christmas tree lightings, music and arts festivals, the beginning or endpoint of parades, etc.) and a quiet shady spot for area workers to enjoy lunch outdoors. Large Alabama cities Huntsville and Birmingham have Big Spring Park and Linn Park, respectively; but smaller Alabama communities have historic town squares and similar spaces that provide an outdoor space for the community to meet and engage in civic life.

4. Midtown Green Street Network

In coordination with City of Madison Planning and Engineering Departments, a plan should be developed and implemented to improve connectivity between Midtown, Madison Station, the proposed recreation campus and Madison Boulevard through greenways and green streets.

East-West Linear Parks and Streetscapes

Improvements to Mill Road, Palmer Road and Old Madison Pike will help create a network of green streets—well-landscaped, tree-lined streets with bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities—that provide attractive, functional routes between city parks and other community destinations. Together with select north-south streets, improving segments of Old Madison Pike



Top: Big Spring Park, Huntsville AL
Bottom: Forsyth Park, Savannah GA



A “complete” local street with sidewalks separated from traffic and shaded by street trees.

and Mill and Palmer Roads as green streets will interconnect Madison Station, City Hall, the Skate Park, Midtown Madison, Dublin and Palmer Parks and existing greenways. See Figure 3.

In addition to an enhanced landscaping, lighting and wayfinding signage may be added to establish a cohesive look along the proposed green streets. Green streets will reflect a strong, quality image of the community, particularly for those attending events at local parks, shopping in Midtown or Madison Station, and visiting other key locations.

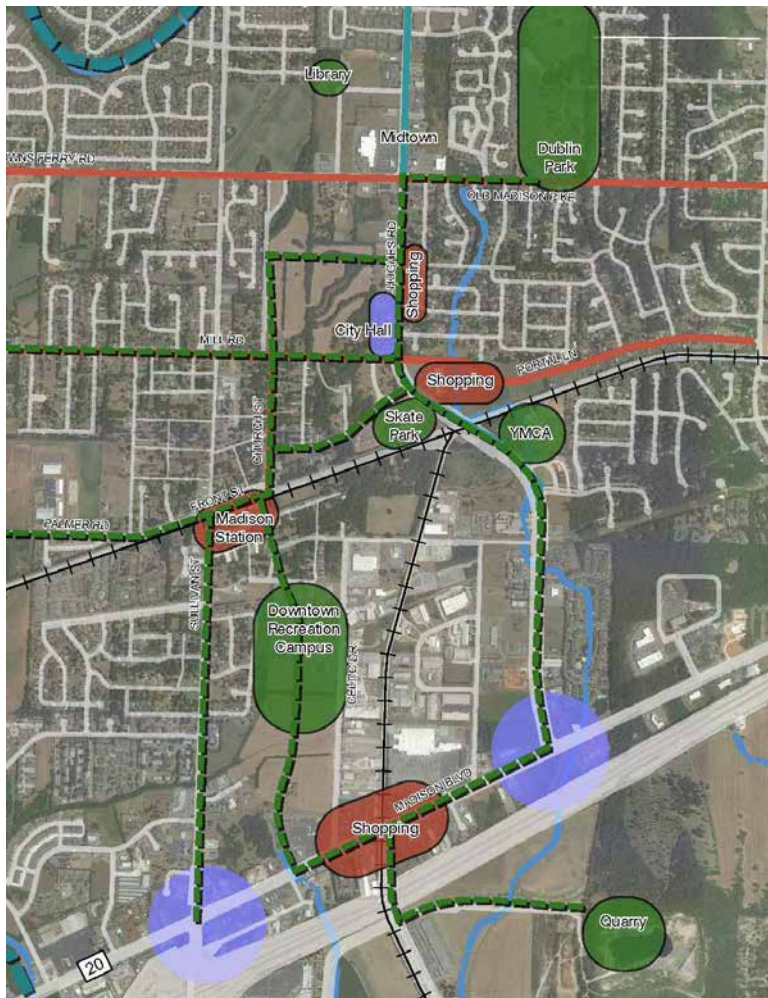


Figure 3: A network of “green streets” will connect recreational amenities, public facilities and shopping areas.



A “complete” collector street with sidewalks and dedicated bicycle lanes.



A proposed “green” street connecting Madison Station, the Downtown Recreation Campus and Madison Blvd. should accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians and include street trees and other design features to establish a strong, attractive image for the district.

North-South Linear Park and Downtown Streetscapes

This portion of the network includes: 1) connecting Midtown Madison, Madison Station, the proposed Downtown Recreation Campus (described above), development sites west of Celtic Drive, and Madison Boulevard and 2) improvements to existing

streets to complete the proposed green street network. See Figure 3.



Downtown streets should include attractive wayfinding signage to direct visitors to nearby destinations.

A new local street is proposed that would extend from Garner Street through the Downtown Recreation Campus and southward to Madison Boulevard and Quarry Road. With several tourist-related and proposed recreational destinations along its route, the street would form a linear park or recreation corridor. Extending the road to Madison Boulevard would create a convenient and welcoming route from the interstate, one that lends a more attractive appearance to visitors than the light industrial environment along Celtic Drive. Available land south of the Downtown Recreational Campus could be developed for lodging and other tourist-oriented businesses convenient to the multipurpose and aquatics facility. The recreational campus and future development would front on the new street rather than Celtic Drive, so that the arrival experience can be more fully managed.

Landscaping, lighting, wayfinding signage and other improvements along the proposed street and downtown area streets—south Hughes Road, Church Street, Sullivan Street, etc.— would establish appealing gateways leading into downtown, while also providing attractive, shaded paths for those out for exercise, window shopping or just strolling around. These streets would likewise serve as spines for redevelopment and reinvestment in and around the town center.

5. Palmer Park Renovation



Sidewalks connecting the sports quads at Palmer Park are not continuous.

A master plan should be prepared for renovation and possible expansion of Palmer Park. Functional and aesthetic improvements at Palmer Park are needed for the complex to better support the city's interest in sports tourism and tournament activity. The master plan should incorporate a new trail system, play areas, and other passive areas for picnicking and passive play.

There are a number of functional improvements that need to be addressed, such as renovation of the Westco Softball Complex and upper baseball quad. Another priority is integrating more passive recreational space and natural areas into the complex so that more of the community can enjoy the facility. This includes improving existing and providing new playgrounds and play areas, pedestrian trails, and picnic areas.

Enhancement of the park entrance and vehicular and pedestrian circulation are needed as well. Sidewalks should be provided to give visitors a safe space to walk between parking areas and play areas and fields. Trees should be provided along walkways and the primary vehicular ways to provide shade and create an attractive image for the park.

The first phase of renovation should include a new entrance; redevelopment of the softball complex with new lighting, new fencing, and improved concessions and common areas. Other early improvements include new age appropriate and accessible play areas, picnic areas and trails.

6. Quarry Park



The Madison Quarry is an untapped opportunity for the city. It is an extraordinarily unique site with exciting possibilities and has the potential to become a regional park for the community. Tourism, recreation and environmental education components can be integrated into the site alongside the existing diving school. Currently, the City owns 66 acres surrounding the quarry proper, which is owned by the Water and Wastewater Board. A master plan should be prepared to discern the appropriate, advantageous and safe ways to use the site. The challenge will be to establish appropriate policies and standards, in coordination with WWB, to assure the safety of visitors and avoid degradation of the site. In addition to on-site investments to provide recreational opportunities, improvements should be made to Lime Quarry Road as part of the green street network connecting the recreation destinations in the Midtown area.



The Madison Quarry can become a unique recreational destination for residents and out-of-town visitors.

7. Greenways, Complete Streets and Nature Trails



Preserved open spaces can be easily outfitted with natural trails for walking and biking. Rugged terrain is especially attractive to mountain biking enthusiasts.

Natural spaces and on- and off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities are integral components of a citywide recreation system. Complete streets—streets that accommodate pedestrians and/or bicycles through multiuse paths, bicycle lanes or sidewalks—add to the ways public streets serve the community. They are useful for exercise as well as getting from place to place. Greenways that contain off-road paths serve much the same function but provide trail users with more natural rather than urban surroundings.

The City of Madison should update and continue implementation of its 2001 Greenways and Trails Master Plan. Attention should be paid to any routes newly proposed in this plan, to those previously proposed routes on which this plan places additional emphasis, and to facilities to serve western Madison, including a possible greenway and trail along Beaver Dam Creek.



Well-designed greenway trails attract pedestrians, runners, and bicyclists of all ages for recreation. When connected to the on-street bike-ped facilities they can also be used for mobility.

Natural areas such as Rainbow Mountain, Betts Springs and the Quarry offer the opportunity for low impact recreation, such as nature trails and conservation. Where appropriate, natural or soft surface trails should be included in sites that are preserved for environmental reasons. These trails should be connected to the city's growing network of greenways and on-street facilities.

In addition to the yet-to-be-built high priority routes listed in the Greenways and Trail Master Plan, the following bike-ped projects are recommended:

- Mill Road from Bradford Creek to Mill Creek Greenways
- Palmer Road/Front Street from Palmer Park to Madison Station
- Sullivan Street from Front Street to Madison Blvd.
- Church Street/Mill Road from Madison Station to City Hall
- Maples Street from Madison Station to Skate Park (including off-street segment)
- Hughes Road/Old Madison Pike from City Hall to Dublin Park
- Northern extension of Mill Creek Greenway
- Southern extension of Bradford Creek Greenway

8. Dublin Park Renovation

There are opportunities to enhance Dublin Park—along with long-term maintenance needs—that suggest an overall plan for its renovation is due. While Dublin is the more well-rounded of Madison’s two community parks in terms of passive recreation, there should be an emphasis on improving and expanding on these aspects of the park. Improvements should be considered for pedestrian circulation throughout the park. Needs of existing buildings, fields and other facilities should be addressed in plans to renovate the park, such as improvements to the indoor and outdoor pools, parking lot and landscaping, fences, roofs and mechanical equipment.

A master plan for the park should explore alternative uses for current soccer fields as new lighted fields are constructed at other locations.

9. Existing Parks and Facilities

The evaluation of existing parks revealed that there is an overabundance of smaller parks and too few large parks compared to traditional NRPA standards. This concern was also underscored by the community’s strong support for development of new community park space.

While it is highly desirable to have small recreational spaces near where people live, maintaining a large number of these can be a burden to the parks department compared to the



Malcolm Field is the only lighted soccer field at Dublin Park.

narrow benefits they provide. Over the years the City has accrued many of its small park spaces through the course of residential subdivision development. This incremental process has gone on without the benefit of an overall plan for where parks should be and how large they need to be or consideration of the increasing maintenance burden. In some cases, several small parks are located close together, somewhat reducing the efficacy of one or another, while other residences are far from parks big or small.

Expanding, improving and building new community parks will help address the priorities of the community and create a more desirable balance within the parks system. But to further deal with this imbalance the City will need to act judiciously in investing in any new small parks, consider elimination of some existing small parks and implement strategies to reduce maintenance needs among many small parks.

Neighborhood Parks

There are a number of ways to increase use and enjoyment of Madison's neighborhood parks, including incorporating exercise trails to encourage adult use. Outdated play equipment will need to be replaced from time to time. Strategic placement of wayfinding signs may also increase public awareness of these smaller parks and lead to greater use.



Several neighborhood parks are sparsely improved and lack the definition and shade that strategically located trees provide.

Neighborhood parks can also be improved by adding natural features such as butterfly and other specialty gardens. These areas can replace large lawn areas that require regular mowing but receive little use. A similar concept is incorporating community gardens into these spaces, which will encourage frequent visits by neighboring residents. Finally, a number of neighborhood parks are lacking in trees that offer shade for users during hot summer months. A few strategically placed trees and seating areas can make parents more comfortable as they watch their children play.

The Parks and Recreation Department should consult with neighborhood residents to consider these and other types of modest improvements to optimize use and enjoyment of these amenities.

Maintenance and Inspections

The Parks and Recreation Department should have a plan for ongoing parks maintenance that establishes priorities and guidelines for maintenance. Staff should receive training on updated guidelines to assure parks meet the level of quality expected by the community. As part of this process, the department should also perform regular inspections of parks, particularly access and safety inspections for playground and picnic areas. Any unsafe equipment should be removed.

A thorough inventory of all park and maintenance equipment will allow the department to create an amortization schedule and budget for equipment replacement more effectively. Maintenance equipment must also be kept up-to-date to assure effective and efficient care of city parks.

10. Senior Center

The senior recreation program is very popular among Madison's older residents. Located next to Discovery Middle School on Hughes Road, the Madison Senior Center is in need of upgrades and will likely require more space as the city's senior population grows. Ideally, a new senior center would be constructed in or adjacent to a community park so the program has access to outdoor space. It is also recommended the senior center facility be designed with a three season porch, include wifi and accommodations for senior fitness programs.



The Senior Center will soon need more space to accommodate the city's growing senior population.

11. Outdoor event space

An outdoor event space such as an amphitheater or similar facility that can be used for festivals, concerts, and similar community events is needed in Madison. This facility may be incorporated into the proposed community park that would likely be built in west Madison or in the civic park recommended to be located in Midtown Madison.



An amphitheater or similar outdoor space can support a variety of community events.

Acquiring New Parkland

Acquiring land

In the process of evaluating property for parks acquisition, the following siting criteria should be considered:

- Is the park needed? The site is located where surrounding residences are underserved by public parks. For example, there is not another park within a ½ mile radius.
- Is the site accessible? At a minimum, it should be easy to get to on foot. The larger the park the more likely it will generate car traffic; and therefore should be along a street where that traffic can be accommodated and will not be a nuisance.
- Is the site central or prominent? Unless they are privately-maintained, parks should not be buried deep within a subdivision. Instead, locations should be sought that make the park a central feature for surrounding subdivisions.
- Is the site large enough to accommodate a mix of recreational uses? Neighborhood parks should generally be in the range of five acres. Smaller sites may be acceptable if acquisition of additional contiguous land is both feasible and likely.
- Are there resources available to develop and maintain the park long-term? Neighborhood parks must be adequately outfitted to be a sustained benefit to residents. The City should be in a position to improve the site and financially absorb the long-term maintenance costs.

There is sufficient space among mini parks and neighborhood parks to fulfill demand through 2025. However, there is current demand for 149 acres of community park space. And by 2025 an additional 66 acres will be needed for community parks.

In the past, the City has accrued most of its small parks through the subdivision review and approval process. Land is reserved by the subdivider and then acquired by the City. This method can be improved to produce a better overall small park network, including producing a few mid-size or larger parks—instead of many new small ones—and encouraging the development of privately maintained neighborhood-serving open spaces.

The City should seek to maintain about 2 acres/1000 residents in neighborhood park space. Currently, the ratio is closer to 1.4 acres/1000 residents. In addition to the community park proposed earlier, additional parkland should be focused toward neighborhood parks of 5 acres or larger. Mini parks (generally under 1 acre) should only be pursued opportunistically and only in locations that would provide open space to serve densely developed areas. Community parks are generally 30 acres or larger, and as described previously, a new community park of 50 acres would help Madison achieve a better proportion of community parkland to population size.

Not all subdivisions warrant a public park. In some cases, a common open space outfitted with a playground, seating and perhaps a small pavilion—as is the case with many of Madison's small parks—is all that is needed. Such modest facilities are within the ability of a typical homeowners' association to maintain. But where a public park is desired, in accordance with this Master Plan, the City should attempt to assemble land for larger facilities. Sites for larger parks can be acquired through direct acquisition in advance of development, through reservation of contiguous tracts within adjoining developments during the subdivision process, or a combination of these methods.

Conservation in Parks

Conservation of natural features should be incorporated into the site selection and design of neighborhood and community parks. Generally, 50-60% of park sites may be allocated toward active recreation, for which it is necessary to manipulate and clear land for sports fields, courts and structures. 25-30% of a park site should be improved for passive use, such as playgrounds, picnic areas and multiuse open spaces, and 15-20% left mostly natural and dedicated for steep slope conservation and stormwater management. Some passive recreational elements, such as trails, that require little or no grading and clearing can also be incorporated into portions of a site that are to be conserved. Retaining a portion of a park site in a natural or near natural state can be advantageous in addressing stormwater management and contributes to the scenic beauty of local parks. It will not be possible to meet these targets in every case and, for some park sites, conservation needs may have a lower priority.

The use of Low Impact Design (LID) techniques can be integrated into the development of active recreational parks to help manage stormwater impacts that result from grading and introducing structures, parking lots and other impervious surfaces. Parking areas may be constructed with a combination of pervious and impervious materials. Rain gardens and swales can be used to collect and allow on-site infiltration of stormwater. Though it will vary on case-by-case basis, these techniques are similar in cost, if not less expensive, compared to traditional, structural stormwater management facilities. LID features can also save on long-term maintenance costs.



This parking lot uses pervious pavers for driving and walking surfaces, gravel for parking spaces and bioswales to collect and clean stormwater.

Rules of Thumb for Park Site Selection and Design

| | Rec. Size | Parkshed (primary coverage area) | Active Rec. Area | Passive Rec. Area | Conservation Area |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Neighborhood Park | 5-10 ac | ½ mi. | 50% | 30% | 20% |
| Community Park | 30-80 ac | 1-2 mi. | 60% | 25% | 15% |

Undeveloped Parks

There are approximately 16 acres of land previously acquired by the City slated to be improved for six new future parks. They range from 0.5 acres to almost 5 acres. These sites should be individually evaluated before plans are finalized and improvements made. For those that are not formally dedicated for park use, it may be more appropriate for the City to dispose of the property for private development. But for those spaces that are dedicated as parks, the City should consider programmatic and design elements that will reduce long-term maintenance. This might include retaining more natural ground cover rather than installing sod across large portions of a site. Where play areas for children are desired, the City should consider types of play equipment that are long lasting, age well and require less maintenance.

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"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

— Yogi Berra

Implementation

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The City of Madison maintains a strong parks and recreation system but as revealed through this planning effort, steps must be taken over the coming years to assure that programs and facilities keep in tune to the needs and interests of the changing community; to offer more diverse, well-integrated activities in larger parks, and to put renewed focus into the quality and long-term maintenance of parks facilities. To achieve these objectives the City of Madison and its parks department must consider parks funding very carefully. Is annual funding for parks consistent with the community's interest and demand for a quality parks system? Are there savings that can be found in the way that current funding is used? Are there additional sources that can be leveraged to assist in enhancing Madison's parks?

Action Plan

The following development recommendations are based upon the needs assessment, community input, and analysis of local trends. Projects have been categorized into Tier 1 Priorities (within 5 years) and Tier 2 Priorities (within 10 years). The priority levels indicate that the recommended project or task be underway or complete within the timeframe indicated.

Tier One Priorities (1-5 years)

Capital Improvements

1. Plan and develop a new Downtown Recreation Campus.
The recreation campus should be planned and developed in concert with the City's planning and economic development office, and with Madison City Schools. The Recreation Campus should be planned and developed as part of a larger mixed use development project that will serve as a catalyst for tourism and economic development. The Recreation Campus should include the following components:
 - Existing football stadium
 - Multiple-purpose indoor recreation building with shared use courts for the following:
 - Basketball courts (4 minimum)
 - Volleyball courts (4 minimum)
 - Indoor soccer (2 minimum)
 - Other courts- Pickle ball, badminton, shuffleboard
 - Outdoor lighted multi-purpose fields (4 minimum)

- Common areas for family recreation, banquets and community meetings
 - Indoor pool (Madison City Schools)
 - Shared parking facilities
2. Acquire new park land for a new Community Park.
 3. Develop a new Community Park. Design a Master Plan for the park to be developed in phases. Construct Phase One of the Master Plan, which should include the following:
 - Lighted Soccer Fields (4 minimum)
 - Lighted Lacrosse Fields (2 minimum)
 - Lighted football fields (2 minimum)
 - Lighted Tennis courts (8 court complex)
 - Play areas
 - Trails
 - Restrooms
 - Concession areas
 - Parking
 4. Develop a master plan for the redevelopment of Palmer Park and implement Phase One. The Master Plan should incorporate a new trail system, play areas, and other passive areas for picnic and passive play. Phase One elements should include the following:
 - Softball complex renovations to lighting, fencing, concessions and common areas
 - Remove football fields and dedicate lower baseball complex to baseball exclusively (dependant on relocation of football to other facilities)
 - New Playground and Tot lot
 - Picnic areas
 - Trails
 - New entrance and signage
 5. Inspect and make repairs to existing neighborhood parks. Replace and upgrade play equipment and remove outdated play equipment.
 6. Complete improvements to the Senior Center, including a three season porch, wifi, and accommodations for senior fitness programs.

Planning and Operations

1. Launch a new Recreational Tourism Program in coordination with the Madison Chamber of Commerce and the Huntsville/Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau. Develop an action plan to promote tournaments, lodging, and local attractions.
2. Coordinate with Madison City Schools regarding shared facilities. Establish a regular meeting schedule to coordinate capital improvement plans, scheduling and maintenance.
3. Coordinate with City Planning and Engineering Departments. Establish regular meeting schedule to coordinate capital improvement plans, scheduling, and maintenance.
4. Remove select neighborhood parks from the parks inventory.
5. Update the Greenways and Trails Master Plan in coordination with City of Madison Planning and Engineering Departments. Develop sidewalk and greenway priorities and seek opportunities for transportation funding and complete street funding. Include the following major Green Streets, linking the central park properties as top priorities in the Plan:
 - Palmer Park to Front Street
 - Front Street to Madison Boulevard
 - Front Street to City Hall
 - Front Street to Skate Park
 - City Hall to Dublin Park
6. Develop a Master Plan for Dublin Park. The Master Plan should include the following:
 - Parking
 - Additional Restrooms
 - Passive recreation opportunities
 - Alternative passive recreation or practice uses for non-lighted soccer fields (dependant on new lighted soccer fields being completed in other locations)
7. Prepare and launch a Parks Maintenance Plan

8. Develop a Strategic plan for Madison Quarry as a regional park in conjunction with Madison Utilities in order to maximize the value of this resource.
9. Update the Parks and Recreation Action Plan (annual)

Tier Two Priorities (1- 10 years)

Capital Improvements

1. Ongoing parkland acquisition
2. Complete Phase Two of Palmer Park Improvements
 - Upper and Lower Baseball Complex renovations
 - Parking lot landscaping
 - Other amenities as determined in the Palmer Park Master Plan
3. Complete Phase Two of New Community Park
4. Implement Dublin Park Renovations, per the new Dublin Park Master Plan
5. Construct a new Senior Center
6. Acquire property for a civic park and construct a civic park/gathering space
7. Complete Greenway and Trail connections within the Greenways and Trails Master Plan
8. Implement Quarry Park Master Plan
9. Plan and implement Low Impact Improvements to Rainbow Mountain and Betts Spring
10. Ensure construction of individual athletic facilities as part of Community Park development shown above (Dublin, Palmer, Downtown Recreation Complex, and New Community park)
 - Baseball Fields (2 minimum)
 - Football Fields (2 minimum)
 - Soccer Fields (2 minimum)
 - Lacrosse Fields(2 minimum)
 - Tennis courts (8 court complex)
11. Continue to develop opportunity- based neighborhood parks as part of new development proposals, either as parkland donations, or fee in lieu.

Planning and Operations

1. Update the Parks and Recreation Action Plan (annual).
2. Update the Recreational Tourism Plan (annual)
3. Update Greenways and Trails Master Plan and funding plan (annual) and conduct regular coordination meetings with planning and engineering regarding the planning, funding, construction, and maintenance of trails and greenways
4. Coordinate with Madison City Schools regarding shared facilities.
5. Coordinate with City Planning and Engineering Departments regarding trails, greenways and sidewalks.

Parks Funding

Funding to develop and maintain the municipal parks system is provided through two primary budget sources: the city's capital improvements program, which includes a wide variety of municipal construction projects, and the parks and recreation department's annual budget, which is used to staff and maintain parks and recreation facilities and programs. As with most cities, the parks and recreation budget is relatively constant while capital improvements funds attributed to parks and recreation tends to vary greatly from year to year.

Capital Improvements

Through this plan the City will be able to strategically set aside capital improvements funding necessary to improve existing facilities and build new ones in the coming years commensurate with community's priorities. The city can also tap into a number of grant programs to add to local funds to implement park plans.

In addition, the city has and should continue to collaborate with Madison City Schools to provide the array of recreational facilities desired by the community, many of which are sports facilities that are essential to school programs but that can be shared for public or league use.

Many communities also use capital fundraising campaigns to bolster funds for specific parks and recreation projects. "Friends of" groups can be created to support fundraising drives.

Parks Operations

The information and community opinions collected in this process offers the opportunity for Madison to evaluate and adjust annual parks and recreation funding to assure that Madison's recreation programs and facilities operate at a level that meets residents' expectations. To put into perspective current parks and recreation funding, annual parks and recreation budgets of peer communities were evaluated. The communities selected for this analysis included cities—in Alabama and neighboring states—similar in size to Madison as well as Madison's neighbor Huntsville.

Madison's parks and recreation funding per population was \$51.14 in FY 2013, ranking well below that of most of its in-state peer cities and was most comparable to that of Prattville at \$54.03 per resident. The average spending per person among the Alabama cities surveyed was \$91.16. Because of its substantial difference in size from Madison and peer communities, Huntsville is able to achieve an efficiency of scale in parks and recreation and other community services—accounting in part for Huntsville's low per person parks spending, \$33.46. Removing Huntsville from the average to compare Madison only to comparably sized Alabama communities results in an average per person spending of \$99.40, almost twice Madison's annual parks spending by population.

The survey of peer cities in Tennessee and Georgia reflected a similar trend. Though Madison spent slightly more per person than one of the cities, the average spending per person among all of the cities surveyed was \$74.75, 46% greater than Madison's annual parks and recreation spending by population.

This analysis indicates that increasing parks and recreation funding would not be unreasonable but would, in fact, bring Madison's parks and recreation budget more in line with peer cities. Such an increase in operational spending would help the parks and recreation department maintain its facilities to the level desired by residents and take on long-term maintenance of facilities added to the system over time. An increase in budget should be balanced with efforts to optimize efficiency within the department, particularly with respect to maintaining Madison's many small parks.

Annual Parks and Recreation Funding in Madison and Peer Cities

| City | Population | P&R Funding by Population |
|-----------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Auburn | 56,908 | \$94.25 |
| Cleveland TN | 42,386 | \$64.47 |
| Collierville TN | 46,462 | \$93.40 |
| Decatur | 55,996 | \$119.80 |
| Florence | 39,447 | \$169.90 |
| Dothan | 67,382 | \$121.14 |
| Franklin TN | 66,280 | \$51.93 |
| Huntsville | 183,739 | \$33.46 |
| Kingsport TN | 51,501 | \$102.05 |
| Madison | 44,972 | \$51.14 |
| Prattville | 34,873 | \$54.03 |
| Smyrna GA | 52,650 | \$41.62 |
| Smyrna TN | 41,705 | \$95.01 |
| Vestavia Hills | 34,090 | \$85.51 |

User Fees

Another consideration in raising parks and recreation funding is charging and/or increasing fees for the use of certain parks and recreation facilities. Not only do user fees raise needed revenue, they can also help track community interests in different facilities and activities. However, overdependence on user fees can place residents of modest means at a disadvantage in accessing parks and recreation facilities. It can also skew the parks and recreation system's focus toward activities and facilities that generate the greatest revenues, whether or not those are the types of facilities most desired by residents.

Funding Resources

In addition to municipal funding, there are a number of public and private funding sources for parks and recreation development that can be utilized to grow and enhance Madison's parks and recreation system. In addition to traditional sources focused directly on parks development,

funding opportunities are also available for parks and recreation but that have a primary focus on conservation or environmental stewardship and transportation.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). These National Park Service funds are administered through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and can be used to acquire land and water for park purposes, develop new outdoor recreation facilities, and in certain instances, renovate existing recreational facilities. LWCF funds provide 50 percent matching funds for eligible projects.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP). These funds, also administered by ADECA, are provided from the USDOT and can be used for acquisition of land or easements, trail maintenance, and construction of urban and recreational trails and related facilities. RTP funds can be used to cover 80 percent of eligible project costs up to \$100,000.

Transportation Funds. A variety of federal and state transportation funds may be used for construction of sidewalks, trails, bicycle and multiuse paths and streetscape improvements. Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds can be used to cover 80 percent of eligible project costs. TAP funds may be applied for through the Huntsville Area MPO or directly through the ALDOT.

Additional funding sources include the US Department of Agriculture, EPA, Department of the Interior/National Parks Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the National Recreation and Park Association.

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Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.

—John Muir, American author and naturalist, 1838 - 1914

Appendix

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Inventory and Analysis

The City of Madison Parks and Recreation Department manages just over 470 acres of active parkland including thirty parks, two greenways and two pools. In addition, the city has 146 acres of green space of which approximately 16 acres are designated for the future development of seven parks and the remainder is maintained as natural preserve areas. Altogether the 618-acre parks system affords the community 14.4 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents. This is well above the 6.25-10.5 acre/1000 residents recommended traditionally by the NRPA.

Parkland

Madison maintains over 600 acres of parks and open space, providing about 14.39 acres of parks and recreational facilities per 1,000 population well above traditional NRPA standards. However, the distribution of parkland is misaligned. Most of the city's park space is found in small parks with modest amenities and an inadequate amount of land is devoted to larger community parks.

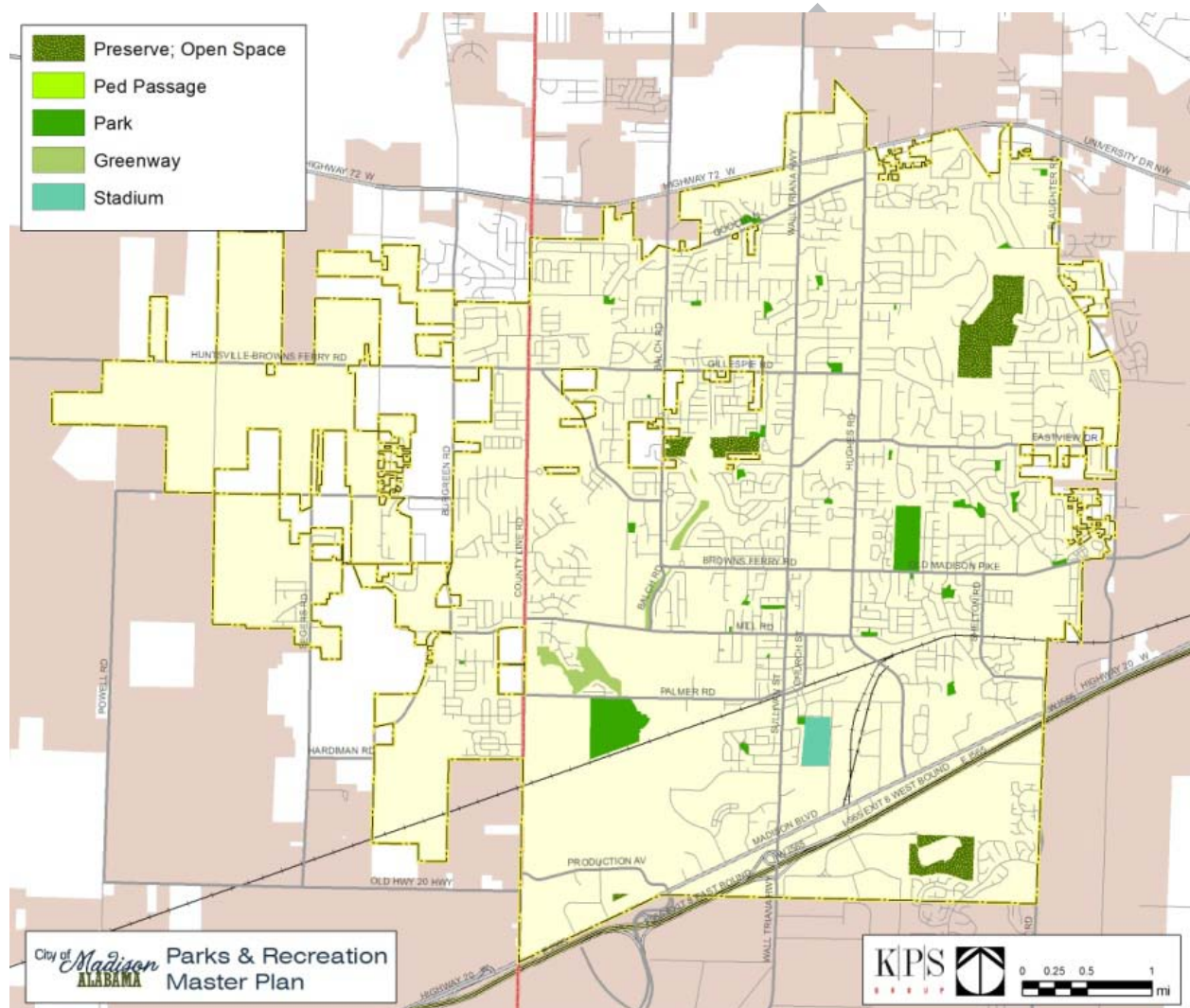


Figure A1 Parkland

This ratio of park space to population also puts Madison ahead of the pack when compared with the larger cities evaluated in

the Trust for Public Land's City Parks Fact 2012 report—the median park acres per 1000 residents for America's 100 most populous cities was 13.1 according to the publication. The 2012 report indicated that lower density cities on average provide more park space by population than denser cities. Compared to similarly low density cities—Madison has approximately 1,450 residents per square mile (the same as Birmingham, the only Alabama city in the report)—Madison was below the median of 20.5 acres per 1,000 residents. And, only about 3.2% of Madison's total land area is park land whereas the median among the 29 low density cities in the report was 5.5%.

These comparisons are useful for assessing overall allocation of parkland in a very general sense but do little to convey how *well* parks serve the unique needs of the people of Madison. These considerations are addressed in the following analyses.

Park Classifications

To get a finer grained snapshot of the parks system, the City of Madison's parks and recreation facilities have been classified into standard categories established originally by the NRPA. These categories reflect the size of parks, their service area and relationship to surrounding neighborhoods and districts, and the types of recreational activities provided within them. This classification system allows Madison's parks offerings to be compared to traditional benchmarks and to create a better understanding of how each park serves the community.

Traditional park classifications established by the NRPA include:

- Mini parks are small (generally under 1 acre), specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population within a small service area
- Neighborhood parks are moderately sized (5-10 acres) parks with multiple activities that serve one or more surrounding neighborhoods.
- Community parks are large (30 acres or more) parks with a wider variety of recreational activities that serve several neighborhoods within a service area of up to three miles.
- Regional parks are large parks with varying recreational opportunities—often associated with unique natural features—that serve multiple cities within a metropolitan region.



- Special use parks are facilities dedicated to specialized or single purpose recreational activities that vary from historic parks, zoos, and golf courses to marinas, nature preserves and arboreta. Special use parks tend to have a community-wide or larger service area depending on the type of activities involved.

Madison's smaller parks do not fall easily within the size parameters established by the NRPA to help distinguish mini and neighborhood parks. For the purposes of this evaluation, the planning team used 2.5 acres as the upper threshold for mini parks and the lower threshold for neighborhood parks. With this parameter calibrated to local conditions, Madison's parks were categorized as shown in Table A1.

In addition to these smaller parks, Madison also maintains two community parks—Dublin and Palmer—and several special use parks (two greenways, a dog park, and the Rainbow Mountain Nature Preserve).

Mini Parks

While mini parks are generally very compact and are typically located amid higher density development, Madison's mini parks serve moderate density, single-family areas and are larger than normal. But while they are generous in size compared to NRPA standards, their physical improvements are minimal, consisting generally of a grassed open area and a playground.

NRPA standards have historically recommended cities provide 0.25-0.5 acres of mini parks per 1,000 residents. With a total of 22.7 acres of parkland devoted to 17 mini parks, Madison slightly exceeds the recommended range.

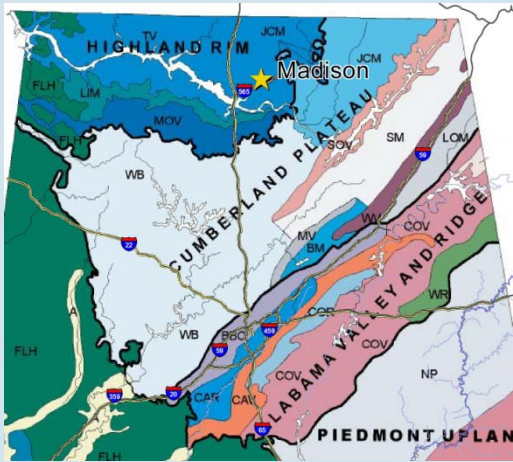
It should be noted that, due to the costs of properly outfitting, maintaining and managing a large number of such small parks, nationally, cities have taken a shrewder stance with respect to mini parks, limiting municipal investments in maintaining existing or building new mini parks. In Madison, such expenses have been controlled somewhat by spare capital investments in them, which have in turn demanded lower maintenance costs.

More recent additions Collinwood, Mandolin, Roy Tate and Windstone Parks have not yet been developed.



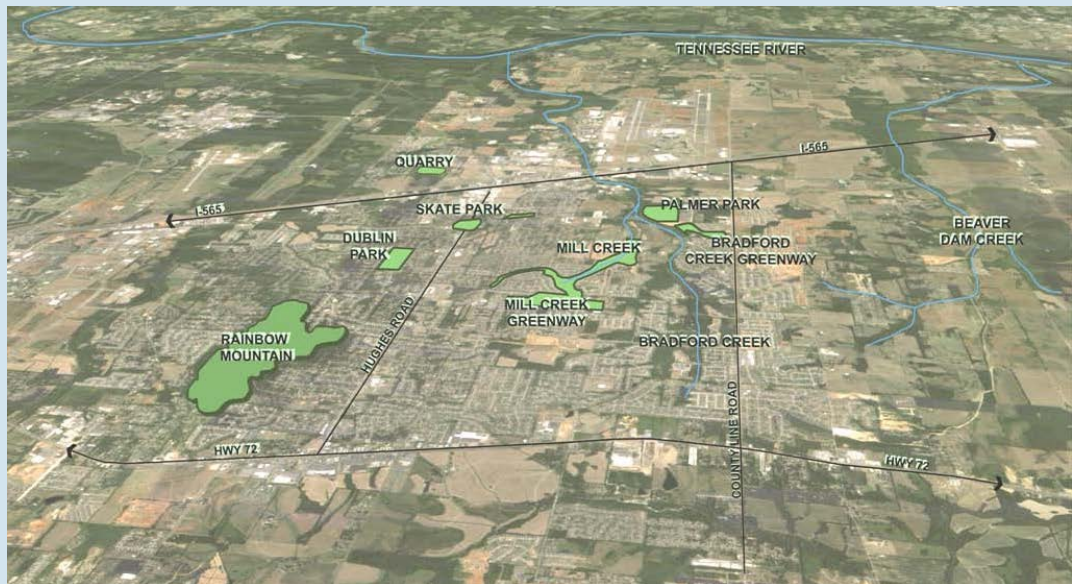
Abbington Downs Park

Environmental Context



The City of Madison is located in the Tennessee Valley district of the Highland Rim physiographic region in north Alabama where the land is flat to gently rolling, featuring expansive floodplains and pasture lands. The landform within the city drains southward toward the floodplains of the nearby Tennessee River along three major streams: Beaver Dam Creek, Bradford Creek, and Mill Creek. Each of these waterways represents a unique opportunity for environmental conservation and recreation.

Rainbow Mountain is a unique landform that stands majestically above Madison's gently rolling terrain. The Mountain is a result of a Hartselle Sandstone Formation consisting of sandstone, limestone and shale. Over many years the erosion of these types of rock produced bluffs, small seasonal waterfalls, and caves. The City has reserved 150 acres of land at Rainbow Mountain for conservation and low-impact recreation. The Madison Greenways and Trails organization maintains a series of nature trails on the mountain, which allow access to its unique natural features. The trails also offer panoramic views of Madison stretching for miles to the southeast and southwest.



Birdseye view of Madison looking south toward I-565 and the Tennessee River

Regional Recreation Context

Madison is located between the cities of Decatur and Huntsville along the Tennessee River in northern Alabama. Both Decatur and Huntsville boast major active recreation complexes, and host regional tournaments that draw large numbers of visitors that pass back and forth along I-575.

Decatur operates four recreation/community centers, one outdoor and one indoor swimming pool, 28 parks that include 17 developed playgrounds, 44 lighted tennis courts, walking trails, a splash pad, and numerous lighted and unlighted softball and baseball fields. In addition, the department operates Wilson Morgan Softball Complex, Jimmy Johns Tennis Complex, Jack Allen Recreation Complex, and Point Mallard Park. The Jack Allen Recreation Complex is the newest facility and boasts an award-winning 27-acre laser-graded and irrigated soccer/football venue with sub-grade drainage and television-quality lighting.



Jimmy Johns Tennis Complex at Point Mallard Park in Decatur

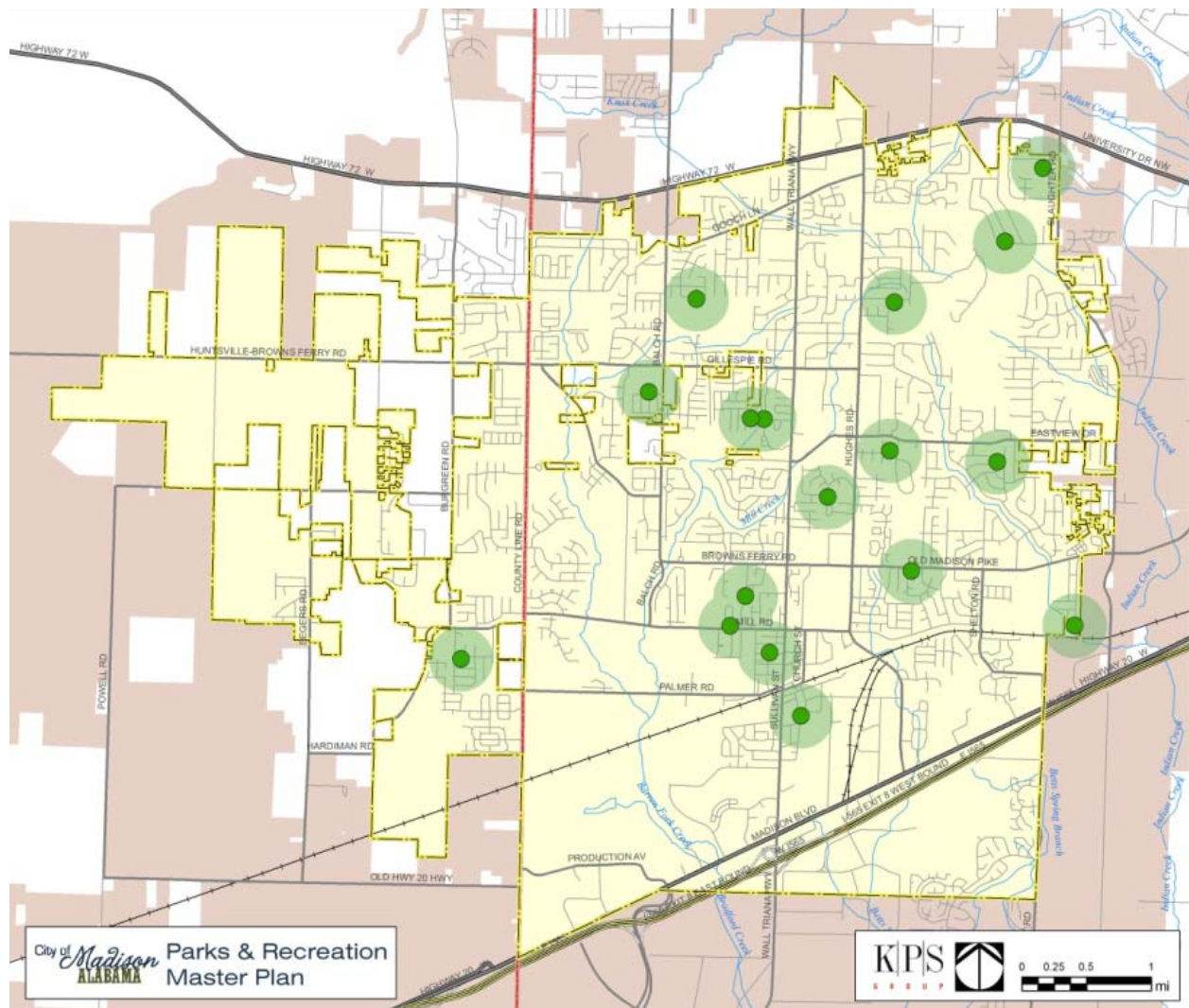
Huntsville, Alabama maintains over 3,000 acres of parks and recreational lands, 13 community/recreation centers and gymnasiums, a soccer complex, metropolitan sports complex, natatorium, aquatic center, a senior center and pool and 60 parks, preserves and greenways. Huntsville's park system includes 44 playgrounds,

Table A1: City Parks

| Community Parks | | Size (ac) | |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| Dublin Park | | 63.0 | |
| Palmer Park | | 102.0 | |
| Mini Parks | Size (ac) | Neighborhood Parks | Size (ac) |
| Abbingdon Downs | 1.6 | Brass Oaks | 3.6 |
| Ashley | 2.0 | Carter | 2.9 |
| Cambridge | 0.6 | Chadrick | 4.3 |
| Cedars | 1.2 | Fieldcrest | 2.5 |
| Collinwood | 2.0 | Homestead | 5.3 |
| Governors | 0.6 | Leathertree | 5.1 |
| Hardiman Place | 0.7 | Joe Phillips | 2.9 |
| Home Place | 2.2 | Madison Point | 3.6 |
| Madison Trace | 1.7 | Mill Creek | 2.7 |
| Mandolin | 0.5 | Rickwood | 2.7 |
| Rollingwood | 2.2 | Shelton | 4.3 |
| Roy Tate | 2.2 | Silver Creek | 2.8 |
| Stewart | 0.5 | Stavemill | 5.0 |
| Stoneridge | 1.8 | Sweetbriar | 4.6 |
| West Highlands | 1.7 | Westgate | 3.5 |
| Windsor | 0.5 | Woodland | 2.8 |
| Windstone | 0.9 | | |



Chadrick Park



Mini parks tend to be accessed most frequently on foot or by bike and thus have a smaller “park shed,” or service area, than larger parks that attract more people, some of whom will travel by car. Generally, mini parks serve an area roughly ¼ mile in radius, or about a five minute walking distance. Locations and service areas of Madison’s mini parks are shown in Figure A2. This map illustrates the number of these small parks throughout eastern Madison and their relative scarcity in the newly developing western area of the community.

Figure A2: Mini Parks have a parkshed or primary coverage area of ¼ mile.

Neighborhood Parks

Madison’s 16 neighborhood parks tend to be small compared to NRPA standards, which recommend a size of at least five acres. Instead, Madison’s largest neighborhood park, Leathertree, is right at five acres. But for their somewhat larger size, there is often little difference between the community’s



Leathertree Park

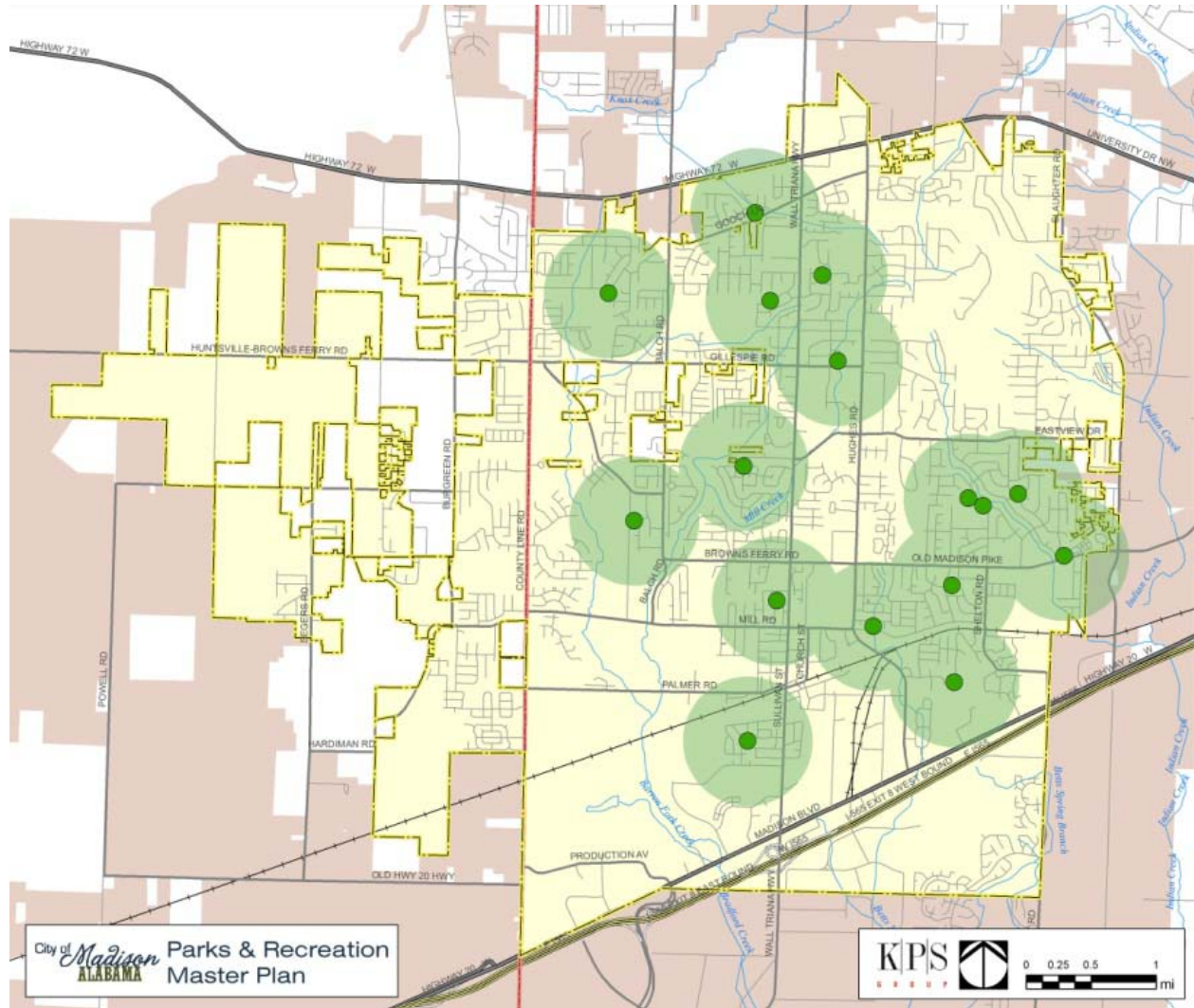


Figure A3: Neighborhood Parks have a parkshed or primary coverage area of ½ mile.

neighborhood parks and its mini parks. Despite sparse improvements, there is room to make physical improvements and broaden the ways in which people use them to be more commensurate with the traditional intent of neighborhood parks.

NRPA standards have traditionally recommended cities provide 1-2 acres of neighborhood parks space per 1,000 residents. Despite their small size, the increased number of neighborhood parks allows Madison to fall within this range at 1.4 acres per 1000 residents. The average size of Madison's neighborhood parks is just over 3.5 acres. For the future Madison should focus on fewer but larger parks—approximately 5 acres in size. All neighborhood parks are furnished with a playground and several also offer a multipurpose field, basketball goals, and picnic tables and/or shelters.

Appendix

More recent acquisitions Silver Creek, Sweetbriar and Woodland Parks have not yet been developed.

Because of the increased amenities and activities normally available at neighborhood parks compared to mini parks, users will choose to walk or bike from a slightly greater distance, up to ½ mile or a ten minute walk. Some users from further away may even choose to drive. As can be seen in Figure A3, as with mini parks, there is a reasonable distribution of neighborhood parks in eastern Madison while there is a significant lack of coverage in the growing western area of the city.

Community Parks

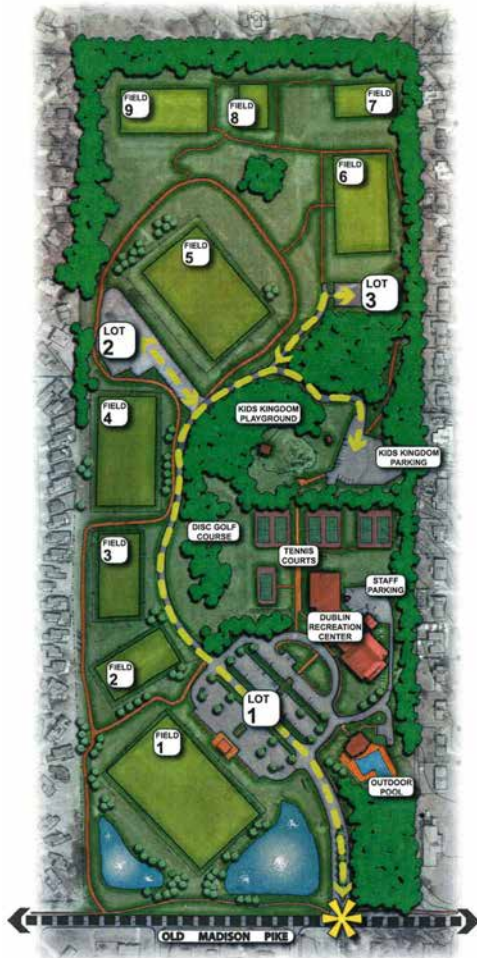
Community parks are of considerable size—generally at least 30 acres in size—because they often contain a mix of natural open spaces, active recreational fields and courts, and structures appurtenant to such uses, including anything from concession stands to community centers. Madison's two community parks easily meet NRPA size standards individually however there is a lack of community park space citywide. NRPA standards recommend 5-8 acres per 1000 residents whereas currently there are only 3.8 acres of community park space per 1000 residents in Madison.

Dublin Park (63 ac)

Dublin Park in eastern Madison is representative of a traditional community park, offering a mix of active and passive recreational spaces and facilities. The Dublin Park Recreation Center includes the administrative offices of the Parks and Recreation Department and also provides meeting space for the community. Due to a commitment to nearby residents the City is unable to light many of the soccer fields installed at Dublin Park limiting use of the fields significantly during the fall.



Top: Aerial view, Dublin Park (Google Maps).
Above: Entry signage at Dublin Park. Left:
Kid's Kingdom playground at Dublin Park.



Dublin Park master plan graphic



Palmer Park

Dublin Park Evaluation

| Qty | Facility | Good | Fair | Poor |
|-----|-------------------------------|------|------|------|
| 1 | Gymnasium | X | | |
| 1 | Indoor walking track | X | | |
| 1 | Indoor pool/locker rooms | X | | |
| 1 | Outdoor pool | X | | |
| 2 | Basketball/volleyball, indoor | X | | |
| 1 | Soccer fields (lighted) | | X | |
| 8 | Soccer fields (unlighted) | | | X |
| 1 | Disc golf course (9-hole) | X | | |
| 7 | Tennis courts | | X | |
| 1 | Playground | X | | |
| 1 | Outdoor walking trail, paved | X | | |
| 1 | Picnic area | X | | |
| 1 | Concessions, rest rooms | X | | |
| | Pond (with fishing) | X | | |
| | Meeting rooms | X | | |
| | Administrative offices | X | | |
| | Entry | X | | |

Palmer Park (102 ac)

Palmer Park in southwest Madison is much larger but is devoted mostly to organized sports use. Because of this intense focus on sports activities, Palmer Park could be considered a special use park. However, with room for additions and changes and with its adjacency to the Bradford Creek Greenway, Palmer can be adjusted to be a more well-rounded community park facility.

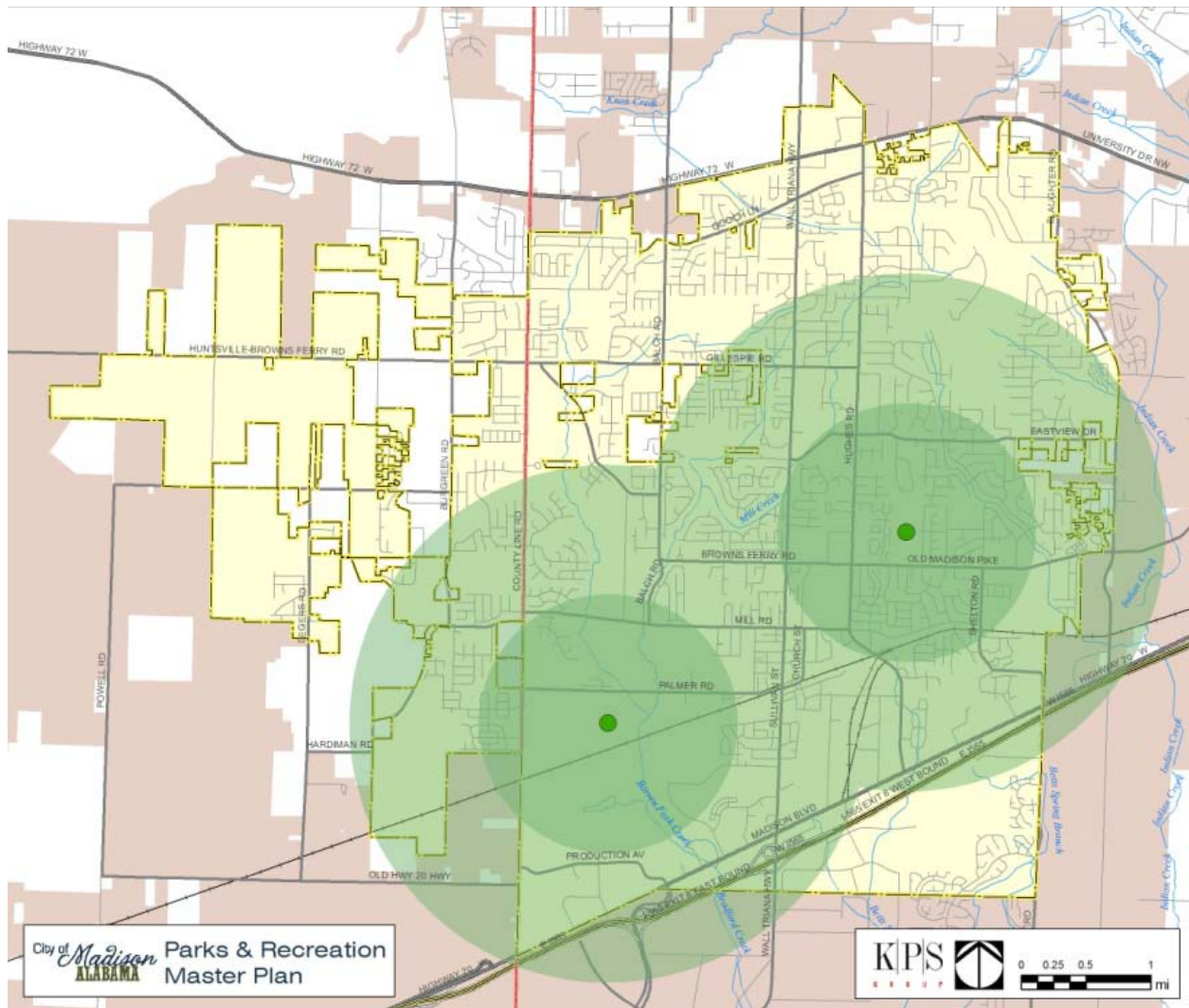


Figure A4 Community Parks primarily serve neighborhoods within a 1-2 mile radius, although other factors may drive attendance at community parks from much further away.



Aerial view, Palmer Park (Google Maps)



Palmer Park master plan graphic

Palmer Park Evaluation

| Qty | Facility | Good | Fair | Poor |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| 11 | Baseball fields | | X | |
| 6 | Softball fields | | X | |
| | Batting cages | | | X |
| 2 | Soccer fields (lighted) | | X | |
| 2 | Soccer fields (partially lighted) | | X | |
| 2 | Soccer fields (unlighted) | | X | |
| 1 | Football fields | | | X |
| 1 | Playground | | | X |
| 1 | Outdoor walking trail, paved | | | X |
| 2 | Concessions, rest rooms | | X | |
| | Trail head (Bradford Creek) | | X | |
| | Entry | | | X |

NRPA standards recommend cities provide 5-8 acres of community park space per 1,000 residents. Together Palmer Park and Dublin Park represent 165 acres, providing 3.8 acres of community park space per 1,000 residents in Madison, falling short of NRPA's recommended range. This shortfall is made evident in the full schedules for fields and courts during organized sports seasons and the lack of significant passive park facilities within either park.

Regional and Special Use Parks

Historically, there are no standards for how many acres of regional or special use parks should be provided to communities based on population size. The provision of these amenities is determined by the demand for protecting and interpreting local natural or historic resources or the demand for other types of activities to which these parks may be devoted. This is

Rainbow Mountain

Rainbow Mountain Nature Preserve is Madison's largest dedicated open space at 150 acres. Located in northeast Madison, the nature preserve maintains habitat for indigenous flora and fauna and also provides over four miles of hiking trails. The preserve was established by the city with the assistance of the nonprofit group Madison Greenways and



Rainbow Mountain Nature Preserve

Trails and the Land Trust for North Alabama. The preserve and trails are maintained with help from Madison Greenways and Trails and volunteer groups such as the Boy Scouts of America.



Rainbow Mountain Nature Preserve (photo courtesy Huntsville Times, Dave Dieter)

Reaching an elevation of 1,150 feet Rainbow Mountain is surrounded by single-family residential development and is one of the last major tracts of pristine land in Madison. Wildlife seen on the mountain include wild turkey, coyote, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, fox, rabbit; and groundhog. Reptiles range from the eastern box turtle to tree lizards. Amphibious salamanders live in the springs. Redbuds, dogwoods, maples, buckthorns, oaks, and many other species of trees can also be found throughout the preserve.

Greenways

As noted in the Growth Plan, greenways are in high demand in Madison. In addition to the nearby Indian Creek Greenway in Huntsville, Madison's greenways offer residents safe routes to get around the community without a car whether they are headed for a particular destination or just out for exercise or a stroll. The City of Madison has worked with local supporters Madison Greenways and Trails Inc. to plan and develop these amenities.

Bradford Creek Greenway in west Madison is a planned five mile off-road trail following Bradford Creek. Funded in part through federal Transportation Enhancements funds, the non-motorized trail will ultimately connect neighborhoods to several area schools, Palmer Park. The trail is located on easements



Bradford Creek Greenway (photo courtesy Huntsville Times, Glenn Baeske)

through private properties and Land Trust properties acquired for conservation purposes. The first segment of the paved trail was opened in 2012 and connects from Palmer Park to Mill Road. The remainder of the already funded Phase 1 will extend to Liberty Middle School. A later phase will extend the trail south from Palmer Park toward I-565.

The Mill Creek Greenway in south central Madison has been built along a greensward bordered by Mill Creek and Balch Road. It currently extends one-half mile from Mill Road to Browns Ferry Road but is planned to extend further north and east. The trail provides access to Mill Creek Elementary School at its southern terminus. The city also constructed a dog park along the greenway. Extension of the greenway is contingent on a bridge replacement that will accommodate a pedestrian underpass along Browns Ferry Road.

Mill Creek Dog Park

The 1.4 acre Mill Creek Dog Park is located along the Mill Creek Greenway on Balch Road. Made possible through funding from the City, County Commission, and local legislators, the park opened in 2010 and is part of a national parks trend. Dog parks were initially sought by advocates in dense urban locales whose residents had little yard space for their pets to get exercise but the popularity of the concept extended to lower density communities, in part due to the social interaction spurred among dog owners visiting the parks with their pets

Open Space Reserves

In addition to these parks, there are 130 acres of open space owned by the City. The largest of these holdings include approximately 62 acres of undeveloped land in the Betts Springs area and the 66-acre Quarry south of I-565. The Quarry is leased by the City to a private diver training business and is not open to the public due to safety issues.



Mill Creek Greenway and Trailhead



Madison Quarry

Recreational Facilities

To more fully quantify the level of service provided by the City of Madison's current recreational offerings, the number, distribution and functionality of its recreation facilities, i.e., baseball fields, tennis courts, pools, were analyzed and compared to available benchmarks. Input from the community, advisory committee and other stakeholders was included to better reflect local recreational needs and values.

Baseball

Madison offers 13 fully outfitted baseball fields for community use at Palmer Park, of various sizes suited to varying age groups. However, two Lower Quad baseball fields at Palmer Park physically overlap with football fields, causing maintenance challenges and scheduling problems. These fields are primarily intended for league use and are in "fair" condition. Local leagues also use city school fields for practice. An informal field and backstop is available for league practices and for pick-up games at Shelton Park. Even after excluding the two Upper Quad fields that overlap with the adjacent football fields, Madison exceeds the NRPA recommendation of 1 field per 5,000.



Basketball

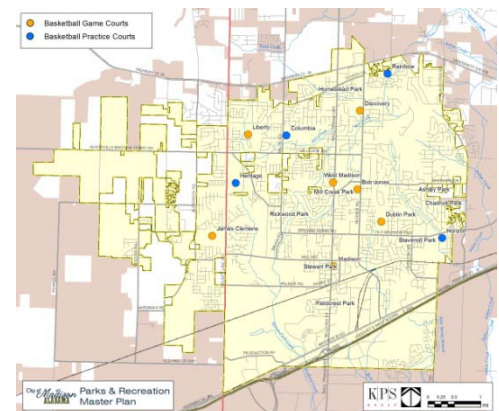
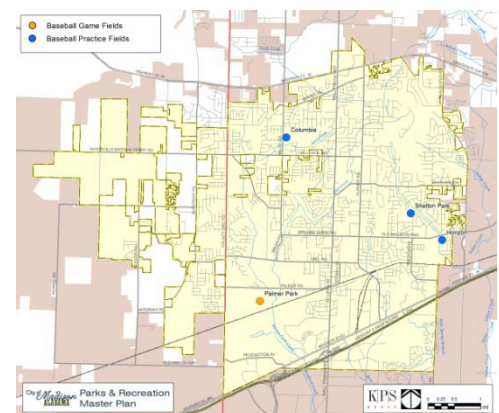
Madison offers two full length, indoor basketball courts in the Dublin Park recreation center and several small parks have half courts and basketball hoops on turf. Excluding these informal courts, Madison offers 0.23 courts per 5,000 population, significantly below the NRPA benchmark of 1 court per 5,000. The Basketball Association of Madison currently uses the courts at Dublin Park and area schools for practice and games. So long as local basketball leagues are able to use school gymnasiums in addition to city park facilities, a lower benchmark may be used for level of service in this category, for example, 1 full court per 10,000 residents.

A Team Effort

A key aspect of the Madison recreational system is that the City and school system maintain a good working relationship with regard to shared use of facilities. Together they are able to meet their program scheduling and that of community athletic leagues.

Top: Baseball practice and game fields

Bottom: Basketball practice and game courts



Recreation Leagues and Programs of Madison

The following sports leagues and programs use city park facilities for games and practices. Several depend on the availability of school facilities. Other leagues and programs, such as those run by the YMCA and area churches, use private facilities for practices and games. The City should continue to support coordination between city schools and sports leagues and programs to assure recreational programs are accommodated properly as the community grows. Continued partnerships between the Madison Parks and Recreation Department, Madison Board of Education and area sports leagues will allow public funding for recreational facilities to achieve synergy and avoid redundancy.

As parks facilities were evaluated, each organization was surveyed to better understand their needs with regard to the recreational facilities at city parks.

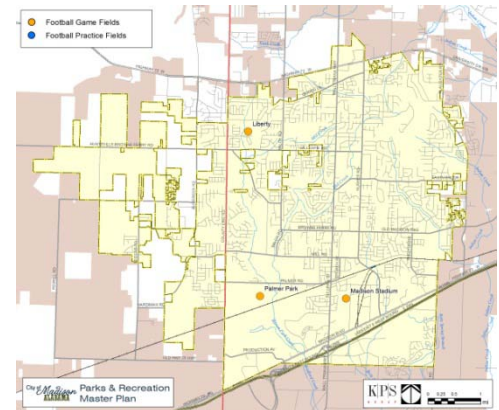


| | |
|------------|---|
| Baseball | Madison Baseball Association Madison Babe Ruth Baseball Association MLB Pitch Hit and Run Competition |
| Basketball | Basketball Association of Madison |
| Football | Madison Youth Football and Cheer NFL Punt Pass & Kick Program |
| Lacrosse | Huntsville Lacrosse Association |
| Soccer | American Youth Soccer Organization |
| Softball | Madison Softball League |
| Swimming | Madison Dolphins Swim Team |
| Tennis | Dublin Park (summer sessions/camps) |
| Volleyball | Madison City Volleyball |



Football

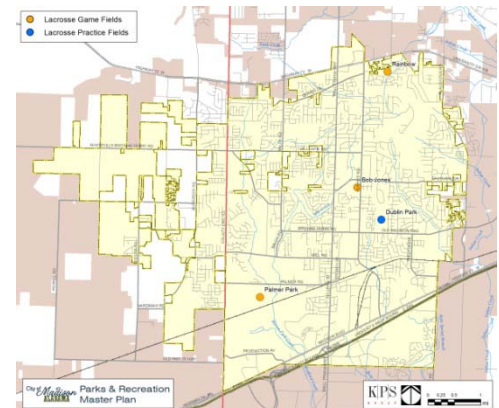
Madison offers two fully outfitted football fields for community league use at Palmer Park; however, these two fields physically overlap with two Upper Quad baseball fields. Multiuse fields at four small parks (Home Place, Homestead, Rickwood, and Stavemill) are available for football (and soccer) pick-up games. League practices and games occur at Liberty Middle School and Palmer Park. There also is a football stadium on Celtic Drive; but, it is exclusively used by Madison City Schools. While Madison roughly meets a benchmark of 1 football field per 20,000 residents; due to an increasing population and the overlap design of the two existing fields at Palmer Park, Madison needs at least dedicated two fields for Little League programs.



Football practice and game fields

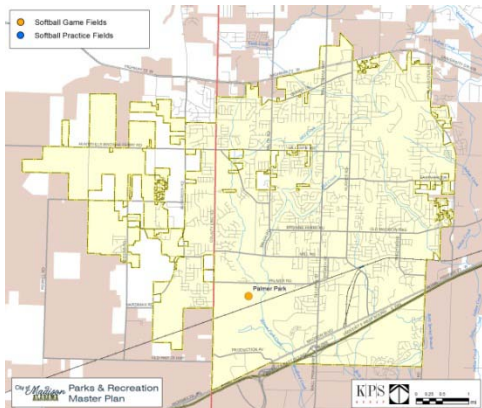
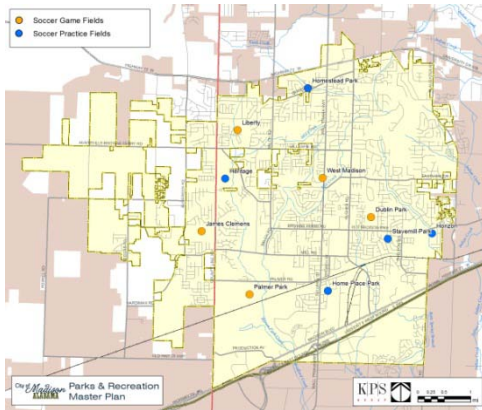
Lacrosse

The Huntsville Lacrosse Association manages youth and club lacrosse programs in the Huntsville and Madison area. Lacrosse games are played on the soccer fields at Palmer Park and at two area schools. Practices are held at Dublin Park.



Lacrosse practice and game fields

Soccer practice and game fields



Softball practice and game fields

Soccer

Soccer is undoubtedly one of the most popular sports in Madison, representative of the sport's rapid rise in popularity in the US. Madison offers fifteen formal soccer fields—six at Palmer Park and nine at Dublin Park. Only one of the soccer fields at Dublin Park is lighted; and at Palmer, two fields are partially lighted and two are fully lighted. This can be a serious limitation during the Fall season when days are shorter. Due to drainage and lighting issues at Dublin Park, soccer fields vary from fair to poor condition. Palmer Park soccer fields are considered to be in fair condition.

Three small parks and two school sites are used for practices by local leagues. Games take place at Dublin and Palmer Parks and at three city schools.

Because of the increased popularity of the sport, the long-standing NRPA measure of one field per 10,000 residents no longer seems applicable. Madison parks exceed this standard by threefold but are unable to meet local demands for soccer facilities. Based on community and stakeholder input, a standard of one "lighted" field per 7,500 residents is recommended.

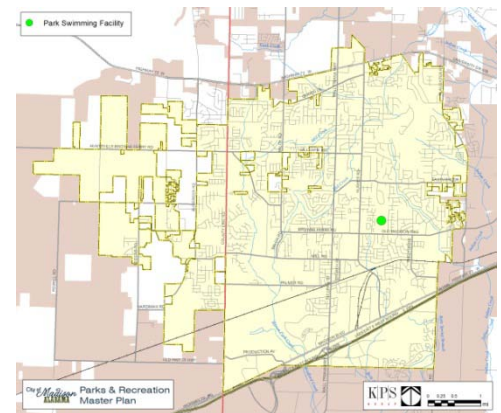
Softball

There are six softball fields at Palmer Park rated as being in poor to fair condition. An informal field and backstop is available for pick-up games at Shelton Park. All softball games and practices take place at Palmer Park. Madison is currently below the recommended standard of 1 softball field per 5,000 residents.



Swimming

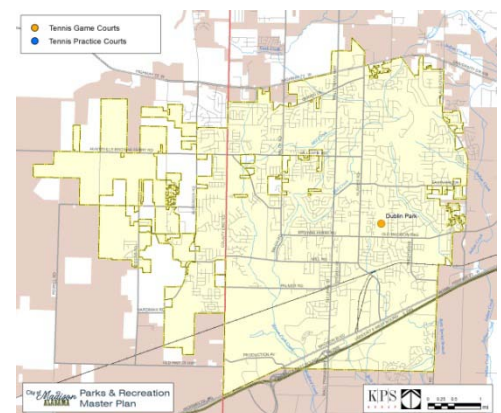
Dublin Park contains a small outdoor pool and larger indoor swimming pool that is shared with Madison City Schools. While these facilities roughly meet the recommended standard of 1 pool per 20,000 residents, because the pool is shared with the school system there is considerable demand in the community for an indoor competition pool. During the development of this plan, the City and Board of Education proposed construction of an aquatic center that could fulfill this community need.



Swimming facilities

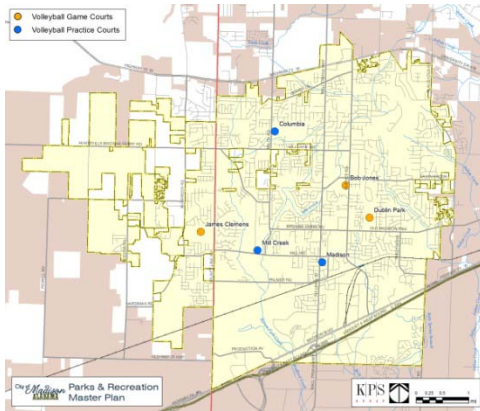
Tennis

There are currently seven tennis courts available for public use. These courts are located at Dublin Park and are rated in fair condition. Courts adjacent to the senior center on Hughes Road were recently demolished. Based strictly on NRPA benchmark of 1 court per 2,000 residents, Madison is extraordinarily lacking in tennis space. However, despite strong interest in tennis reflected in comments from community meeting participants, Madison does not have a strong demand for tennis commensurate with the traditional NRPA standard. Instead, the city is more likely to meet the needs of the community and avoid oversupply of tennis facilities using a benchmark more similar to 1 court per 5,000 residents.



Tennis courts

Volleyball



Volleyball practice and game courts

There are two indoor volleyball courts available for public use at the Dublin Park Recreation Center rated in good condition. There is a considerable lack of volleyball courts in Madison compared to the traditional NRPA standard of one court per 5,000 residents. However, the city youth volleyball league is able to use some school gymnasiums for indoor games. Because there is discussion of an adult league being formed, additional volleyball facilities should be considered to serve future demand, although the standard could be reduced to one court per 6,000 or a similar threshold and can include some outdoor courts.



Needs Assessment

On evaluating Madison parks and recreation facilities against national standards and then comparing that to local demand, parks and recreation standards were calibrated specifically to the values and priorities in Madison. This established a set of localized standards through which the Parks and Recreation Department can forecast recreational needs as the city's population grows. The following table represents the projected need for different types of park space, fields, courts and other recreational facilities over the next several years.

The recommended standards should not be seen as rigid measures but guidelines to help the City prioritize its investments over the next decade. In several cases, the standards assume continued partnering with the Board of Education in providing adequate facilities to meet the community's recreational needs. Finally, they are not fixed and should be re-evaluated when the City updates its parks and recreation plans.

Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

The following table projects the amount of park space and recreational facilities that will need to be added to the current park system to meet future demand. For 2013, the existing level of service is indicated. The rightmost columns indicate the number of acres, courts or fields needed to provide an adequate level of service in each category as the community grows. With additional population growth, the City will need to add another 30 acres by 2025 for a total addition of community park space of 125 acres.

| | Activity | Proposed Standard | Current Amount | 2014 | 2020 | 2025 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------|----------------|
| | Population (Estimate/Projected) | | | 47,800 | 52,000 | 58,000 |
| Demand 2014-2025 | | | | | | |
| Parkland Needs | Mini Parks | 0.25-0.5 ac per 1,000 | 23 ac | - | - | - |
| | Neighborhood Parks | 1-2 ac per 1,000 | 58 ac | - | - | - |
| | Community Parks | 6.5 ac per 1,000 | 162 ac | 149 ac | 27 ac | 39 ac |
| Facility Needs | Baseball | 1 field per 5,000 | 11 | - | - | 2 ¹ |
| | Basketball | 1 court per 10,000 | 2 | 4 | - | - |
| | Football | 1 field per 20,000 | 0 ² | 2 | 1 | - |
| | Lacrosse | 1 field per 20,000 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Soccer | 1 field per 5,000 ³ | 5 | 4 | - | 2 |
| | Softball | 1 field per 5,000 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| | Pool | 1 pool per 25,000 | 2 | 1 ⁴ | - | - |
| | Tennis | 1 court per 2,500 | 7 | 8 | - | 8 |
| | Volleyball | 1 court per 5,000 | 2 | 4 | - | 4 |

¹ Replacement of 2 existing fields

² Excludes fields overlapping other facilities

³ Lighted field

⁴ Coordinate with City Schools

In addition to the active recreation facilities needs shown in the preceding table, a number of additional parks and recreation amenities are desired by the community and should be considered as the City invests in new parks and recreation facilities:

- Amphitheater or similar outdoor event space
- Larger senior center
- Indoor recreational facility
- More trails and greenways
- More passive outdoor space

Trends

Those values a community holds regarding parks and recreation can change over time. Indeed, the quick rise in popularity of soccer over the last 30 years has had a fundamental impact on local parks and recreation departments across the United States. But cultural, economic, and technological shifts can also greatly affect the way communities think about and value parks and recreation. Interests can also change at regional, state and local levels. These trends must be taken into account in planning for the future of the local parks system to assure that investments are proactive and will meet future demands while also adjusting to economic changes.

National Trends

Local governments across the United States have seen losses in revenue as a result of the recent recession leading to more austere city budgets and cuts in city services, including parks and recreation. But this is not necessarily a temporary phenomenon. Instead, it has led to a much broader debate over the ways in which taxpayer dollars are used by the government. However, a national survey conducted by the NRPA in 2010 found that the public still places considerable importance on parks and recreation. About one-third of respondents indicated that too little is spent on parks and recreation while only 6 percent believe too much is being spent.

Parks and recreation facilities are increasingly being recognized as a public service that can help reduce obesity—and the health problems associated with it—by encouraging physical activity. Walking paths and trails, in particular, have quickly



America's Top 10

The following are the most popular sports and recreational activities in the US according to the *Sports, Fitness, & Recreational Activities Participation Topline Report* from SGMA.

1. Walking for fitness
2. Bowling
3. Treadmill
4. Running/jogging
5. Hand weights
6. Bicycling
7. Weight/resistance machines
8. Freshwater fishing
9. Billiards/pool
10. Dumbbells

Appendix

grown in interest as the nation's concerns over physical inactivity and obesity have risen. Trails are also being recognized as a key element in making communities more walkable. And though some federal funding sources are tightening, in the future it is likely that existing or new health and safety-related funding sources may come available that can be used in the context of parks and trails.

The *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2012* produced by the Outdoor Foundation indicated that participation in outdoor recreation is increasing and that 2011 saw an increase in three million participants. The report also states that running, jogging and trail running were the most popular outdoor activities by participation in 2011. By frequency of participation, running, jogging and trail running also came in first followed by biking/mountain biking, birdwatching, fishing and hiking.

As might be expected, age is a determining factor in participation in outdoor recreational activities as evidenced by the national survey. Participation rates drops steadily from 63% for those aged 6-12 to 38% for the 45 years and older category.

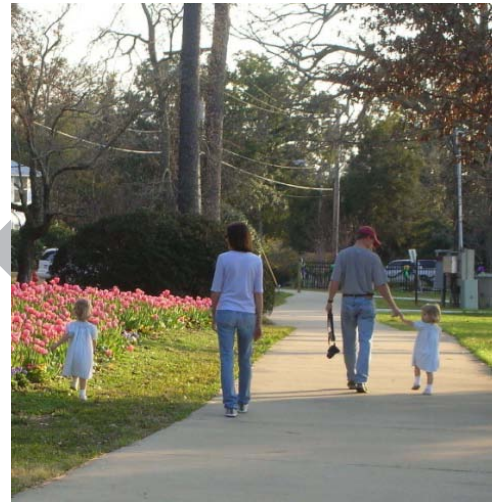
According to the 2012 *Sports, Fitness, & Recreational Activities Participation Topline Report* from the Sporting Goods Manufacturers' Association (SGMA), fitness activities—class-based fitness, stationary cycling, working out with machines, cross training, etc.—have become the most popular way to get exercise and are particularly popular among Generation Y/Millennials (those born 1980-1999).

The SGMA report also indicated that the three most popular team sports are basketball, outdoor soccer, and baseball. But, Ultimate Frisbee, lacrosse and gymnastics are seeing steady gains in participation while traditionally popular sports are remaining the same or losing popularity.

Indoor recreational facilities are also increasing in popularity because they can be used throughout the year and scheduled events are less subject to inclement weather. These facilities are also a part of cities' efforts to tap into a growing sports tourism industry.

Regional and State Trends

As has happened nationwide, walking for pleasure has grown considerably in the last twenty or so years in Alabama. According to the Alabama Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor



Recreation Plan (2008-2012 SCORP), over 65% of residents enjoy walking for pleasure. Other top recreational activities indicated in the survey were swimming (52%), football (43.8%), freshwater bank fishing (31.5%), outdoor basketball (21%), camping (20.1%) and soccer (18%).

The SCORP survey also identified outdoor recreation participation levels and perceived needs in each of the state's 12 regions. In the region around Madison, which includes DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison and Marshall Counties, the most popular local outdoor recreational activities¹ included: walking for pleasure, pool swimming, football², freshwater bank fishing, outdoor basketball, soccer and hiking. The survey polled residents on what they felt there was a greatest need for in each region. In the Madison region, participants said playgrounds, walking, hiking and bicycling trails, parks, and swimming pools.

Alabama's Most Popular Outdoor Recreation Activities by Age Group

| Age Group | #1 | #2 | #3 |
|---|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Under 10 | Swimming | Beach | Walking |
| 10-19 | Swimming | Beach | Walking |
| 20-29 | Walking | Beach | Swimming |
| 30-39 | Walking | Beach | Swimming |
| 40-49 | Walking | Beach | Swimming |
| 50-59 | Walking | Beach | Football ¹ |
| 60-69 | Walking | Beach | Football ¹ |
| 70-79 | Walking | Beach | Football ¹ |
| 80 & Older | Walking | Football ¹ | Beach |
| ¹ Includes attending football games. | | | |

Visitors spent more than \$7.6 billion on sports travel in 2011, a 6.5 percent increase over the previous year. Most of that is spent locally on food, lodging and retail, providing a significant economic boost that's good for everyone in the community, including the parks and recreation department.

-Emily Atwood, Athletic Business Magazine

¹ Beach recreation and historical tourism were also among the most popular activities in the region but were not listed above due to their primarily taking place outside Madison or the region.

² Includes attending football games.

Sports-based tourism is increasingly being pursued to generate revenue in Southeastern cities through their parks and recreation systems. Cities are developing expansive sports complexes and indoor sports facilities to attract youth and professional tournaments in efforts to attract visitors who will patronize their shops and eateries and stay in local hotels. This is particularly true in Alabama where cities from the Gulf Coast to the Tennessee Valley are developing facilities to draw crowds on long weekends. There has already been considerable success in the state in outdoor recreation tourism exemplified by the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and national fishing tournaments.

Key Facts:

- Until now, there has not been a long-term vision to guide the development of the parks and recreation system.
- The parks system is imbalanced. The City has too many small neighborhood parks and not enough large community parks.
- The quality of the parks system does not meet the expectations of the community.
- There is a very good working relationship between the City and the school system regarding the shared use of facilities. Each is dependent upon the other for facilities to meet their recreation program scheduling, particularly with respect to court sports (i.e. volleyball and basketball) and swimming.
- Soccer is a very popular sport in Madison, surpassing the NRPA standards for usage. As Madison's soccer programs continue to expand and grow, the need for lighted fields becomes more and more critical. Most soccer fields are located in Dublin Park and are unlighted, which prevents their use during evening hours.
- Youth football fields physically overlap youth baseball fields at Palmer Park, resulting in scheduling problems particularly in the fall.
- There is a desire for an adult sports programs in Madison.
- There is an active Senior Program housed in very outdated facilities.
- High school swimming programs share facilities with the youth recreation programs at Dublin Park, causing scheduling conflicts
- The existing community parks are heavily burdened with athletic fields and activities and are lacking open space for trails, play areas, picnics, and other passive uses.
- There is a desire and a need for a central civic gathering space that serves as the heart of the community.
- There are tools in place that require parkland donation or "fee in lieu" as part of the subdivision process in Madison; however, these requirements are not currently in practice

Definitions

Active Recreation Recreational activities, usually of a formal nature, and often performed with others, requiring equipment and taking place at prescribed places, sites or fields, including swimming, tennis and other court games, baseball and track and other field sports and activities.

Community Park A recreational facility of 25 or more acres that serves multiple neighborhoods, or a population within a three-mile radius. Community parks include a mix of active and passive recreational activities and may include intensively developed facilities and relatively undisturbed, open spaces.

Greenway A pedestrian, bicycle or multi-modal trail, linear park or combination thereof. Greenways range from landscaped, on-street corridors with a paved walking/biking surface to mostly natural, linear open spaces oriented along a paved or soft-surface trail.

Mini Park A recreational facility one acre or less in size that serves a concentrated or limited population, such as those within less than a quarter-mile radius.

National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) An advocacy organization formed in 1965 dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation and conservation. NRPA produces research, education and policy initiatives for its membership in support of the development and management of parks and recreational facilities.

Neighborhood Park A recreational facility five to ten acres in size that serves a neighborhood, or a population up to 5,000 within a half-mile radius. Neighborhood Parks are generally focused on passive recreational uses but can also accommodate active recreational facilities.

Passive Recreation Recreational activities that are generally unorganized and noncompetitive, including picnicking, bicycling, walking and free play.

Park Shed The area surrounding a park, from which its most frequent users travel from. A park shed increases in size with the size of the park and the diversity of facilities it provides. A park shed of one-quarter mile represents a walking or bicycling distance of five minutes or less. A park shed over one-half mile

is typically associated with a community or other major park serving a large population, the majority of which will travel to the park by car.

Pick-Up Game Ad hoc baseball, soccer or other sports activity played amongst friends as opposed to a baseball, soccer or similar game scheduled and officially overseen by a sports league.

Regional Park A recreational facility of significant size (often more than 200 acres) that serves multiple communities or cities within a drive time of up to one-hour. Regional parks range from major outdoor recreation complexes oriented toward sports tourism to nature preserves oriented toward a wide variety of nature-based recreation.

Sharrow A travel lane shared by vehicles and bicycles, indicated by a marking (an arrow or chevron typically with bicycle symbol) in the center of the lane.

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